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URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND CHURCH RENEWAL  
" IN KINSHASA

by

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Kinshasa, capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo, is a young city, founded in 1881. From the time of its founding by the Belgians until independence in 1960 the city was carefully fashioned and groomed by a strictly controlled population. Every area was planned and migration of people to the city was limited.

Now this metropolis is in the midst of a chaotic expansion unparalleled in its history and has literally burst at the seams with the post-independence influx of people from the bush. Fifty square miles of squatter villages have developed in a large half-moon around the older, colonial city located on the south banks of the Congo River. This has completely changed the complexion and personality of the city. The population has mushroomed from 350,000 in 1960 to at least 1,550,000 in 1967 and the greater mass of these new people live in this sea of temporary houses and haphazard development. This newer area is virtually unschooled, unchurched and has little law and order.

## I. THE PROBLEM

Before independence, Protestant missions, following their usual habit of concentrating on rural areas, neglected the establishment of a strong church in the city. The city mission was organized with the philosophy of rural work, and the city church today is still structured for a rural community. Its approach to life is legalistic and the church lacks creativity in defining its theology. The interchurch fellowship is still divided geographically along the old mission lines. Presently, the Protestant church is actively ministering to only one-half of one percent of the city population. However, eight percent of the people were active in Protestant churches in their villages before they came to the city.

The Catholic church is ministering to approximately three percent of the population. Thirty-five percent of the people were related to the Catholic church in some way back in their village.

The problem is that the Protestant church in the city, growing by 300 to 400 per year, is encompassed by a community which is growing by 200,000 a year, and it is being submerged without knowing it. There are several admirable buildings being erected. There is a constitution that has been drawn up for church union lying in a drawer;

pastors and missionaries are meeting monthly for coffee and planning sessions for city-wide events; the faithful ten or twelve thousand are meeting regularly for prayer and worship. Schools are slowly developing and a new seminary is being organized. Those who are involved in the daily work of the church are working hard. But, the church is not involved in the daily life of the city, judging its movements, reconciling its divisions, ministering to its sick. It is not fathoming truth, defining the urban-industrial life, or helping men to relate to one another in open dialogue. Rather, in the relationship to the city it is pensive, retiring, dreaming that something might happen, and yet not knowing what or how.

## II. THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY

Throughout the city and squatter zone there are approximately thirty Protestant fellowships that meet regularly. Several of these in the older parts of Kinshasa have over a thousand members, but the majority have from one hundred to three hundred members. The purpose of this study is to explore a more adequate strategy for these churches so that they might realize a fuller ministry to Kinshasa.

This involves drawing a realistic picture of the city. This is not to present a detailed geographical and

sociological study of the capital, but rather to define more succinctly the place in which the Protestant group must be involving itself. This will also involve an attempt to discover what is the present size and shape of this city-wide church.

To fulfill this purpose it will be necessary to discuss the nature and mission of the church with two objectives in mind. The first objective will be to state clearly areas within the nature and mission of the church that are important for dialogue. This paper will not project a form or organization for the church, but it will promote enough structure to initiate dialogue believing that the form of the church will evolve as it is needed. The second objective in discussing the nature and mission of the church is to state why the writer believes the church must become involved immediately in meeting many tragic needs that encompass a whole city's suffering. Finally, points of action will be suggested whereby the church can begin to renew her own vision of her nature and mission and at the same time immediately more toward realizing a greater ministry to the city.

### III. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

To my knowledge there has never been a detailed study of the church in Kinshasa made except for a rather

superficial study which the writer made in January of 1964. The denominations of Kinshasa keep very sketchy statistics, if any, for their yearly reports, and these have never been compiled for an overall view of the church in action. This study is the first attempt to discover the present dimensions of the total Protestant church and to study the effectiveness of its total ministry.

As well as studying itself, every local church needs to define its own mission field in order to gear its ministry to the community which it wants to serve. Up to this time neither the leadership element of the Congo church, including the missionary staff, nor the laity have appraised the communities which they serve, but have, with some degree of fear and trembling, drawn apart from them. This is a natural tendency for a conservative group in a fast changing society where they as a people are bewildered by the uncontrollable, overpowering change. This study is a first attempt to analyze those aspects of Kinshasa which are important to the church so that fear might be dispelled through understanding and the church might move into the offensive.

In order to be on the offensive the church needs a vision of her purpose that includes an adequate concept of her nature and mission and a sensitivity to the deepest needs of the community in which she finds herself. This

vision will never come from one person's contemplation, but will only come out of the searchings of the community of Christ. Presently the church institution is divided into four larger denomination and a myriad of smaller denomination and this division inhibits creative dialogue by the total church. Some years ago a constitution was drawn up and there was talk of uniting at least three of the larger groups, but certain problems eventually took the drive out of the movement. This study contains a hope that the divisions within the institution of the church can be superceded by dialogue. Eventually a vision of the mission of the church could result in church union--not on the level of institution but on the level of purpose and mission. This is necessary if the church of Kinshasa is going to work with the major needs of the city.

One other value of this kind of study is that it can help another corner of the world join in the growing dialogue about urban church renewal. The church in underdeveloped countries must accept the fact that their world is going urban. By 1975, 30 percent of the world population will be urban and 35 percent of the African population will live in cities of over 5,000 people. But, the major concern of the church in underdeveloped countries is in the rural areas. This point is illustrated by the vast number of committees and agencies set up to study and

encourage rural work in our various echelons of local and world church organizations as compared to those few encouraging urban work. It is hoped that this study will add to this world dialogue as we work with the church in Kinshasa and have the opportunity to test by fire the proposed ideas and evaluate the church's and community's response.

#### IV. PROCEDURE AND SOURCES

The temptation is to limit this study to one denomination in one section of Kinshasa and suggest a program for renewal, but the problems of each denomination are so deep that every group must contribute its energies in a combined effort if any one denomination or all denominations are going to move into the offensive.

Therefore, the procedure of this dissertation will first be to look at the historical and sociological development of Kinshasa with the emphasis being the contemporary milieu in which the church finds itself. The second concern will be to determine the size and program of the church in Kinshasa and to see how far it is reaching into the basic needs of the community. Third, a discussion of the nature and mission of the church will be presented in order to project in the last part a program of action to help in renewing the church. The fourth part will suggest

various courses of action which might spearhead the struggle for church renewal.

Data available about the Protestant church in Kinshasa is limited. In 1964 this author visited every pastor in the city in search of data and discovered that records are not being kept. In 1966, a second missionary visited every pastor, and could not pull together a coherent report. This condition demonstrates the kind of rudimentary analysis that needs to be made if the church is going to have an accurate picture of its effectiveness. But there is enough data available, inaccurate as it may be, to give a general picture of the church and pinpoint some of its problems. The limitation in data concerning the Protestant churches does not deter the study of the city or environment in which the church finds itself. At the same time it does not inhibit a study of the nature and mission of the church that is applicable to the church wherever it is in the world. Certain ideas can be projected for renewal that can be debated and implemented while making a more detailed study of the church.

A wide variety of sources will be used for data. The original limited survey made in 1964 and personal observations will be enlarged upon through correspondence with Congolese and missionaries. Several surveys made by Louvanium University, the Catholic university at

Kinshasa, and the United Nations are available. The World Council of Churches is primarily concerned with rural work, but they do have some material available on various projects being carried on in urban areas. Our libraries have a wide range of material that will be used. During a full year of study all of my work centered on the problem that will be discussed in this dissertation. This classroom work will be one of the valuable sources used to explore the problem.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF KINSHASA

Kinshasa is the capital of a nation which is larger in area than Europe, and about a third as large as the United States, covering more than 905,000 square miles of central Africa. This verdant nation, the Congo, straddles the equator and is shaped like a giant saucer with the central basin of the Congo River curving through the center. Its highlands, which sometimes exceed 6,000 feet, form the edge to the north, south, and east.

Three hundred miles from the West coast the placidity of the inland water system, the second largest in the world with 8,000 miles of navigable waterways, is interrupted as the Congo River begins to tumble toward the sea. Within one ten-mile-stretch of this last 300 miles there is a drop of 300 feet which could produce thirty million kilowatts of electricity at a cost lower than that of the Tennessee Valley Authority. Stanley Pool is the broad point in the river where the inland waterways give way to the rapids. It is here that the capital cities of Brazzaville and Kinshasa are located on the North and South banks.

The purpose of this chapter is to look at the historical and sociological development of Congo and more

particularly of Kinshasa in order to understand the contemporary milieu in which the church finds itself.

## I. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

The Portuguese discovered the Kingdom of the Kongo at the mouth of the Congo River ten years before Columbus discovered America. They found it populated by a happy people who had created an orderly social structure and who lived subsistently by farming and hunting.

However, between the 16th and 18th centuries several million people were lost to the slave trade from this area and the Kingdom was reduced to poverty and starvation.<sup>1</sup> From those early years until recently, the history of the Congo is generally one of exploitation with some of the periods marked by real cruelty.

Although history is vague at this point, it is believed that Pierre Van den Broecke, traveling with Portuguese traders and Copachin missionaries, worked his way up the Congo rapids in 1609 and first sighted what later came to be known as Stanley Pool. Henry M. Stanley, an American news reporter, after fulfilling his quest to find David Livingstone, descended the Congo River and

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<sup>1</sup>G. W. Kingsworth, *Africa, South of the Sahara* (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 38.

traversed the Pool in the 1870's. These early explorers discovered two villages on the South bank of the Pool. Kintambo, which was near the rapids; and Kinshasa, which was five miles to the East.

Stanley, who is linked so vitally to Congo's development in these early years, failed to interest the British in this new territory. The treaties, which he had persuaded the chiefs of the Congo basin to sign were finally given to Leopold II of Belgium. These treaties gave the rights of sovereignty to Leopold in return for protection and gifts. The protection soon turned into exploitation as the King set up "concession companies" to develop the area.

Growing rivalry among the European powers over the continent of Africa produced the Berlin Conference of 1885 in which Germany, France, Great Britain, Portugal and Belgium divided up the continent as colonies for themselves. Here originated one of the most important underlying causes of the conflict and chaos of modern Africa. Colonies were established with almost total disregard for geographical or ethnic boundaries. Whole tribes were divided, giving rise to all sorts of disputes over law, land, rights, and customs.

A classic example is that of the Bakongo people who live to the West of Kinshasa. Their territory was divided among the Belgians, French, and Portuguese. This put national borders and barriers between what was literally a

family of people. ABAKO (*Alliance des Bakongo*) was founded in 1950 as a cultural and ethnic association for the Kongo people. A part of its *raison d'etre* is restoration of the ancient kingdom. In the late 1950's this group became the first Congolese political party, and its leader became the first president of the new republic.

After discovering the two villages of Kintambo and Kinshasa, Stanley used Kintambo as a depot for supplies. Later he renamed this village Leopoldville after his patron. This was one of the first residential districts for non-Congolese, and soon became the seat of the government for Leopoldville Province. Kinshasa, was to the East and more centrally located on Stanley Pool. Therefore, it became the industrial center. The Railway from Matadi, which was built by Stanley, also terminated at this point.

Until the advent of the railway all baggage and produce had to be carried by porters from Matadi, the port available to ocean going ships. The walking journey from Matadi to Kinshasa took three weeks. However, the 227-mile-railway cut the trip to two days, and finally in later years to one day. More than this, it opened up the vast interior of that nation with its ability to transport tons of materials and produce. Also, at Kinshasa, a port was developed for river steamers and as early as 1907 there were 80 such shallow draft vessels plying this inland

waterway.<sup>2</sup>

During the 1880's both Christian missions and many business firms began to establish posts in and around these villages. The businesses were concerned with distributing imported merchandise in the interior and collecting and processing export products. These posts eventually became the headquarters for the firms that over the years invested in extensive facilities across the Congo. The Christian missions were concerned with distributing the laws and, hopefully, the love of God.

The capital of the colony was Boma, on the coast, until 1929 when it was transferred to Leopoldville. The major buildings of government were built on the land between the two ancient village sites which tied the two areas together into one large metropolis. In 1960 the city became the capital of the new republic and in 1966 the name was changed once again from Leopoldville back to the original village name of Kinshasa.

By 1960 Kinshasa was a striking city. Near-sky-scrapers, handsome theatres, excellent schools, large stores and super-markets overflowing with the world's luxuries, and fine hotels, made people from all over the

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<sup>2</sup>Frederick Starr, *The Truth about the Congo* (Chicago: Forbes, 1907), p. 62.

world feel that this was a better home than their homeland. Philippa Schuyler describes the city that she knew in 1960 in these terms,

Often called "the jewel of the Congo" it is really magnificent--a tribute to the Belgian genius for visual beauty, taste, style and order. Nowhere is the eye shocked, the nose affronted. There are no garish advertisements, no deafening sounds. Luxury hotels like the Membling and the Stanley are chic, artistic and original. Homes, schools and hospitals have elegance without eccentricity. The Dutch-Flemish sense of exactitude, order and cleanliness was united with the French-Wallon sense of romance and artistic style. To find such visual beauty in the heart of Central Africa seems a miracle; of all the Congo's lovely cities, this is the crowning glory . . .<sup>3</sup> It was wonderful for everyone but the Congolese.<sup>3</sup>

The Europeans were able to shelter this jewel for themselves until independence in 1960 by controlling immigration. The only Congolese who could reside in Kinshasa were those who had a legitimate purpose for being in the city and the means to provide for himself. Missions, business firms, and government agencies had to provide this assurance.

By 1958 there were 389,547 inhabitants in the city and 21,568 of these were non-indigenous.<sup>4</sup> With the advent of independence most of the population control restrictions

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<sup>3</sup>Philippa Schuyler, *Who Killed the Congo* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1962), p. 70.

<sup>4</sup>E.T.J.M. Neven, "Leopoldville," *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1966), XIII, 978.

were dropped or became ineffective with the weakening of law enforcement. The city began to mushroom. Since 1960 it has been growing at the rate of about 200,000 a year and is now a metropolis of around 1,550,000 to 1,700,000. A large squatter zone developed around the older city consisting of about 50 square miles of haphazard shanty town. It is in the shape of a large half moon hemming in the older city against the bank of the river.

In spite of the hardships of inadequate housing and unemployment the city continues to mushroom. Those who are from the villages and bush usually return many times to their home in an effort to remain simultaneously related to the culture in the village and culture in the city. But, now there is a first generation of city-dwellers who are totally disinterested in the old mores and problems of life in the bush. They speak the trade language of the city, Lingala, and study in French. Those who have given themselves totally to the city have started a permanent African urban population and will determine the new culture of the city.

## II. COLONIAL POWER STRUCTURE

It is traditional to analyze the colonial power structure in the Belgian Congo in terms of a trinity composed of the administration, Church, and large enterprises. It is important to recognize that not

only was this triple alliance a virtually seamless web but each component, in its area of activity, was without peer in tropical Africa in the magnitude of its impact.<sup>5</sup>

Congo was the personal fief of Leopold II until 1909, and much of the money that was spent on the development of this land was his personal wealth. For this reason he founded a system of government that was closely linked to the business development. He not only sought to earn his money back, but through exploitation supported all of his ventures.

From the beginning Leopold II had been suspicious of the political designs of non-Belgian Catholic missions. In 1906 he worked out a concordat with the Vatican, which guaranteed that this missionary effort was to be essentially Belgian. A system of cooperation was worked out in which the state subsidized the schools and paid for the maintenance of the missionaries, while in exchange the total enterprise would remain under governmental administration.

Protestants were always outsiders. Their mission work was carried on by people from Scandinavia, Holland, England, and America and their loyalty to the colonial enterprise was always under suspicion. The protestants of

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<sup>5</sup>Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 10.

Belgium maintained only one small mission.

### III. GOVERNMENT

Kinshasa is involved in three echelons of government. The first is the central government of the nation. Up until 1960 the national form of government was strictly a colonial administration. Through the 1950's, as colonial solidarity was disintegrating in the face of the aspirations of the Congolese, there was talk of developing a form of government that would lead to the training of Congolese and eventually evolve into one of equal representation, but the machinery turned too slowly. As anarchy slowly spread, the choice was to use force to maintain control or negotiate independence. The colonial system had eroded so badly by 1960 that force was impossible and a formula for independence was thrown together.

The machinery built for governing the nation was improvised at the last minute and was never tested by the Belgians much less practiced by the Congolese before they took over. There was no constitution at the time of independence. A fundamental law was voted by the Belgians and given to the Congolese as a temporary measure until they could write their own constitution. Since there was not one Congolese lawyer in the country, this task was eventually given to an international committee of jurists.

The second echelon is the communal system of government which was developed by the colonialists for the urban centers. Kinshasa was divided into eight African communes, two European communes, and one mixed commune. They were to be governed by councils and Burgomasters elected from their constituents. The city council was made up of the Burgomaster from each commune plus interest-group representatives. The latter off-set the large number of Congolese Burgomasters and kept the majority of votes in the hands of the Europeans. This is the only point where Congolese had the opportunity to train for self-government, but since the reforms were not instituted until 1958, two years before independence, the value of the commune as a means of political training for other echelons of government was lost.

The third echelon of government that is important to the city of Kinshasa is that employed in the bush. The squatter zone that has grown up around Kinshasa, which contains perhaps a million inhabitants, is not a part of the communal system, but is on land that was considered the bush until 1960. Therefore this *Nouveau Cité* with acute urban problems limps along with the old "bush system" of government.

The Belgians developed a system of government throughout the bush whereby problems of administering

policy would be handled solely by local European administrators. Decisions were made, and policies handed down to the traditional village chiefs for implementation. The local Belgian administrator worked with the chiefs without the help of a council or decision-making body.

Today the squatter zone is governed by a Congolese administrator, responsible to the province and not the city council, working through a couple of chiefs who claim to have been in charge of the land before the squatters moved in. This leaves the squatter zone with very little law and order, and no effective channel through which to appeal for justice in any matter.

Until independence, the Congolese working in the many offices of the government were not allowed to advance beyond the rank of clerk. After July of 1960 these workers filtered quickly up through the administrative ladder until they met the politicians at the top. The inexperience of the hastily advanced workers has created the present chaotic state of most government offices. Whatever function a bureau may have been created to perform before independence, it now accepts its semi-paralyzed state as the norm.

Political parties are not categorized by ideological characterizations, but rather by ethnic loyalties. The people migrating from various parts of the nation have

grouped their settlements in the urban areas according to tribe and language. The political parties have been the offspring of these urban associations and have been regional.

Almost all parties have been spawned in Kinshasa, and after taking root in the city have been carried back to the region from which the people came. Now and again several ethnic groups or parties will join together to represent a larger population, but these parties have been extremely unstable.

The Congolese politicians suffer from two misfortunes. First, the sudden decision to give the colony independence demanded the formation of such a class within a couple of years. Thousands of positions opened in all echelons of government all over the nation. Second, the elite from which this class was drawn was, by necessity, far too limited. There were only 30 Congolese university graduates and not all of these were interested in government. The only Congolese who had been accustomed to handling authority were the chiefs and they were untrained, older men who were respected in the village, but who knew little about making administrative decisions.

Within 48 hours after independence two major tribes in the southeastern area of Congo seceded, the Force Publique revolted and the political machinery could not

handle the situation. To make matters worse the European population, in Kinshasa, fled and their number was reduced from 21,000 to 2,000 within a couple of days. Many of these were still working as technicians with the government, and their departure made still another weak link in the machinery.

The kind of political class necessary to govern this nation is growing very slowly. There are students studying in the Congo, but they are in a vacuum as far as experiencing good government. There are students studying all over the world from Peking to Washington and returning with different philosophies. The various schools around the world from which they come endow them with the feeling that only their ideas are right and cannot be compromised. In their homeland there is no forum where they can talk with one another. The United States government has built a school of law and administration for the government and this is now operating, but it will take time for this school to produce students and they, in turn, must work their way up the ladder of government and politics.

#### IV. ECONOMICS

The Belgians have been justifiably proud of their economic achievements in the Congo and have sometimes contended that their tardiness in the sphere of

political development was more than compensated by their remarkable accomplishments in the social and economic fields.<sup>7</sup>

From the earliest days of the Congo Free state, Leopold II had to work very closely with the Belgian financial circles who in turn worked through the concession companies to reach out and dominate the four corners of the African domain. With the annexation of this area to Belgium in 1908 other Belgian firms continued to join the conquest. A majority of the companies eventually came under the direct or indirect control of Société Générale, a Belgian banking establishment, so that by 1960 70% of the Congo economy fell within its scope. Since the Congo government had a totally separate budget from the mother country, it had to work closely with the business community. The government maintained substantial interest in the ownership and control of the companies but did not take advantage of her position. The companies flourished because of prerogatives they derived from association with the state and the state budget was always met. Over the years government and business evolved a smooth working relationship, as colonial civil servants of senior rank acquired well-remunerated directorates in one or several

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<sup>7</sup>Gwendolen M. Carter, *Five African States Responses to Diversity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963), p. 60.

colonial firms after an early retirement from government.

A month before independence the colonial government sold its interest in the major companies so that the new government could not in any way control the companies. This was met with little hostility because the Congolese did not understand what was happening, but it is illustrative of the mistrust which continues to pervade the relations between government and business.

The last minute, pre-independent maneuvering of ownership and severing of channels of communications planted the seeds of economic chaos that have flourished since 1960. Not only has the government suffered from economic decline but as a slow paralysis has crept through the business world, job opportunities have dwindled.

The government and businesses of Kinshasa were able to support a population of around 370,000 before independence. Although there are no figures available, there has been a slight increase in job opportunities for Congolese in government, but with the number of establishments closed down in the industrial area, employment is scarce in industry. Sometime late in 1961 the rate of unemployment passed the 50% mark, but there are no accurate figures from 1962 on.<sup>8</sup> During the last seven years the

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<sup>8</sup>Paul Raymackers, *L'Organisation des Zones de Squatting* (Paris: Editions Universitaires, 1964), p. 116.

city has increased in size four and a half times. Much of this increase is comprised of people looking in vain for jobs.

Since tribal custom requires those who have an income to aid those from their clan who are in need, the employed individuals very quickly find themselves responsible for food and clothing for fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five people who have moved in. The working man soon finds his salary inadequate to support his household and he begins to apply pressure at work for a raise.

Before independence there was a slow development of small indigenous businesses in the native quarters of the city. By 1956 there were 7,000 self-employed persons.<sup>9</sup> From 1960 on this has accelerated until today every other house has a small carpenter shop, barber shop, store, tailor shop, machine shop, or some other ingenious business under a tree or in the dooryard. A store might have a couple of bottles of coke, beer, a few packs of cigarettes, some soap, or a few items from the family garden outside of the city to boast as its total inventory of stock, but it is open for business. The store or shop might be an open window, a piece of roofing on four sticks, a bench or table, and it is always open. The margin of survival is

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<sup>9</sup>Young, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

very small. To maintain their claim on life, women resort to prostitution and men turn to thievery. Children, lacking the deviousness of their elders, die from disease and malnutrition.

## V. SCHOOLS

Since the first days of the free state, missions have enjoyed a monopoly on education. From the beginning all Catholic schools were subsidized by the government, and this helped them in the development of what is now a large school system across the Congo. After 1948 the Protestant schools were accredited and also received subsidies.

In 1954 a Socialist-Liberal government tried to bring to life a network of lay schools that would challenge the monopoly of the missions. African "witnesses" were produced for both sides of the argument and this development was the first "breakdown of Belgian solidarity, a disintegration of the ruling 'trinity' of government, church, and business, on whose understanding colonial stability had been resting."<sup>10</sup>

Although figures are not available for today, until 1960 Congo had the highest rate of elementary schooling in

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<sup>10</sup>Carter, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

Africa, 56 per cent. In breaking this figure down, one discovers that the first two grades account for 64 per cent of the total elementary school population, and 12,408 of the country's 15,971 primary schools offered only these two grades. In 1960 only 9 per cent of those who had entered school six years earlier finally completed the entire elementary school program. In 1960, 2.2 per cent or 37,388 of the elementary school population were in High School. However, 4,000 of these were non-Africans. At that time there were two Congolese universities with a combined enrollment of 420 students. There were another 1,000 students being trained in Catholic seminaries, which for years was the only higher education available at all.<sup>11</sup>

This picture is for the nation and the statistics represent the situation in 1960. Since then, primary schools have been adding classes to offer more children the opportunity to study and complete all six years. However, the quality of the schools has deteriorated as the missions have turned over all teaching and most of the administration of these schools to the Congolese.

The real thrust today is in the field of secondary education with the opening of many more schools. Many nations and organizations are supplying teachers and there

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<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 85.

are some Congolese with university training beginning to teach. At the peak of U.N. operations during the academic year 1963-64 this organization was supplying 800 secondary school teachers and jumped the total enrollment to 85,000. Teachers teach a minimum of 25 hours a week (solid subjects), materials are hard to acquire, and the facilities are often poor.

Before independence there were two universities, Louvanium founded by the Catholic Church in 1954, and State University founded by the Congo government at Elizabethville in 1956. Four years ago the Protestant missions created the Free University at Kisangani. This University is continuing to operate in spite of having lost its facilities and supplies to the rebels in 1965. During this period of crisis the Catholic University at Kinshasa (Louvanium) divided its facilities with the faculty of the Free University and the two operated on the same campus.

Estimates as to the number of students studying in Kinshasa vary from 18,000 to 100,000. There are many little private schools that have sprung up and exist through the extraction of high tuition. Some industries that are fighting for survival have also started their own schools. The majority of these are trade schools and students learn by working as apprentices. There are also

many church-related schools that are not recognized and the students are not counted. It is the author's feeling that 18,000 could represent the number in accredited schools and 100,000 could include those in non-accredited schools and apprentices.

Approximately 50% of the population of Kinshasa is under 21 years of age. Therefore, there are about 775,000 young people in the city, and some 465,000 of these are of school age.<sup>12</sup> Whichever figure is correct regarding the number of young people studying, there is a large percentage who are neither in school nor at work.

Some young people do find work and there are a few who do realize their dreams in finding a school, but the others drift. Failure, fear, and despondency accompany their life in the city. There are always "*les écoles pamba*" and "*les petits métiers pamba*" for those who are drifting. At the school one pays a little tuition each morning and then goes through the motions of study. Nothing is learned but a certificate will be given at the end of a certain period of time with the promise that it will open up job opportunities. The employment that falls into this category is hawking magazines, cigarettes, pop, stolen merchandise, matches, razor blades, artifacts or

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<sup>12</sup>Raymackers, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

flowers; changing black market money; polishing shoes; helping a barber, driver, mechanic, mason, carpenter, tailor, wash-jack, blacksmith, or repairman of every object going; washing cars; playing a musical instrument for all occasions; porter; pushing a *pousse-pousse*; keeping a garden, etc. Seldom do they receive regular pay for their work, but they hope to learn an occupation or gain a favor. Often the work is assigned to the young person by the family and all benefits are reaped by the family.

#### VI. SOCIAL WELFARE

During the year 1926 there was a critical labor shortage as industry was expanding faster than capable Congolese were being trained to meet the need for workers. Industrial paternalism was developed and proved successful in stabilizing the working force. Housing, family allowances, schools, and training programs for the wives were all made available to the Congolese. The following statement from a memorandum of *Union Minière* set forth the typical principles for administrating social policy.

The colonizer must never lose sight of the fact that the Negroes have the souls of children, souls which mold themselves to the methods of the educator; they watch, listen, feel, and imitate. The European must, in all circumstances, show himself a chief without weakness, good-willed without familiarity, active in method and especially just in the punishment of

misbehavior, as in the reward of good deed . . . (The European) must interest himself constantly in the life of the natives, in their well-being; must guide them, examine their complaints; punish them when necessary with the tact, the calm and the firmness which are required.<sup>13</sup>

In Kinshasa this policy was administrated through the *Office des Cités Africaines*. African housing projects were promoted along with the expanding of schools and hospitals. A network of *foyers sociaux* was established to train women for family responsibility in the city.

The social welfare services were not set up as agencies within the government, but developed by organizations outside of the governmental framework. These voluntary organizations were granted subsidies. An outstanding example of this kind of development was the medical program.<sup>14</sup> By 1957 the Belgians were spending \$24,000,000 annually on health by subsidizing 124 clinics, 2,160 dispensaries, 308 general hospitals and medico-surgical centers, and 90 specialized centers such as leprosariums. European medical personnel, numbering 2,580 and including 686 doctors, were involved in the program. They had trained 5,232 African medical personnel, including 3,744 nurses. There was 4.4 beds available per

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<sup>13</sup>Young, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>14</sup>Schuyler, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

1,000 Congolese. This can be compared with 2.4 beds per 1,000 in Egypt and .3 in Liberia.

Two problems developed after independence. First, even though the purpose of the programs was admirable, the people were only involved as passive recipients of the largesse. Since there was no involvement in organization and decision-making, the programs lost popular support. Second, since the programs were not a part of the government organization, they were the first to lose their financial support as government spending dipped into the red.

In rural life in Africa, the family and community institutions ensure an individual the minimum of security. As long as the group or village remain small enough for the individuals to know one another it is an integrated whole governed by collective restraints. The family and clan assume the responsibility for those members who cannot look after themselves. For this reason an organization along modern lines is not necessary.

But there are conditions which accompany the rapid growth of urban developments like Kinshasa which cannot be counterbalanced by the family or clan and need special welfare programs. Some of the major conditions are the weakening of family ties and of traditional institutions, the transformation of the role and status of women, the

difference in outlook between generations, the creation of a rural class and urban classes, the growth in the towns of an unskilled labor reserve which results in low salaries and poverty, the occupational lag between school and employment which produce growing numbers of young unemployed, the lack and mediocrity of low-cost housing, and malnutrition and undernourishment which cause increased susceptibility to infectious diseases.<sup>15</sup>

## VII. LABOR UNIONS

Although there were unions for Europeans in Congo as early as 1920, the right of Africans to unionize was not conceded until 1946 and, even then, with such restrictions as the right of access of colonial officials to all meetings and records. It was virtually impossible for organizations to develop freely. Strikes continued to be illegal until 1959.

The larger firms in Congo were unique in Africa in that they stabilized their manpower by encouraging the settlement of the whole family and providing adequate housing. Their paternalism was an acceptable substitute for unions in the early years. Also, the larger companies

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<sup>15</sup>"Planning for Social Development with Special Reference to Africa," *International Social Service Review*, No. 9 (April 1963), 13.

established small committees with equal representation from labor and management to which labor could take their grievances. Management picked labor's representatives, but the presence of this committee delayed the development of unions for some time.

The labor unions have always had to fight the competition of tribal unions. Every tribe in the city has an informal organization which demands regular contributions from all people of that tribe who are working. In turn it helps desperate cases, returns those who are destitute in the city, helps with marrying and burying costs, etc. In recent years, with the tremendous number of unemployed in the city, this fund has found itself defunct a lot of the time, but it is still competition to the unions. Workers would rather pay into the tribal fund than a union fund.

Thus the trade union is caught in a vicious circle: it is deprived of funds because the services it ought to render are provided by non-industrial organizations supported by the workers, and it cannot provide rival services because it has no funds.<sup>16</sup>

One of the major battles of the 1950's that caused deep distrust and resentment toward management was fought over access to employment, and discriminatory salaries. Although the battle for access to employment

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<sup>16</sup>Young, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

centered in the area of civil service, it was also felt in industry. In civil service there were four categories of which the first three and the top half of the fourth required university training. Often there were Congolese who understood the job better than the European because he was there permanently employed while the Europeans came on short terms, but he did not have the degree to hold the job. By 1953 there were several Congolese with adequate studies, 40 in 1956, and 400 by 1958. They were denied the opportunity to move up the scale and there was a cry of discrimination.

The second problem was the double standard for salaries. The scale of salaries for Europeans was much higher than that of Congolese, and there was one ambiguity that caused the new elite to perceive it as a matter of race. According to the Eurafrican theory, the colonizers were as much a part of Africa as the new elite. The cities were their new homeland too. On the other hand, the idea was advanced that the high salaries were necessary to entice men to come to Congo to work. The Africans said that those who had the degrees and experience were ready to be a part of the Eurafrican group and fill these jobs.

A reform measure for access to employment was finally passed in 1959, but the double standard of wages was never changed. These two issues crippled the growth

og unions adminstrated by Europeans and caused a deep mistrust that carried over into industry as unions became African.

Today in spite of these obstacles, unions are growing, but there is a very bitter struggle going on between union and management, and the agencies of the government that counterbalance these two forces are too weak to make their contribution. The general economic chaos is discouraging to any businessman, and labor disputes can be the straw that makes him give up.

## CHAPTER III

### SOCIAL PATTERNS AND MORES

Unlike other African nations, the Congo had no pre-European urban communities, and its towns have literally sprung up from the ground. Whether their origin was due to commercial, industrial, or administrative factors, the outstanding quality is the rapidity of their growth.

The purpose of Kinshasa was to be a government and commercial center for the nation and as it has reached out to the four corners of the land, representatives of all areas have flowed into the city to form the capital. Ethnographers have distinguished 200 tribes and 700 local dialects across the nation and it seems as if they all can be found in the market places, squatter zones, business districts, residential areas, and government in this metropolis.

The Belgian historian Andre Schohy describes it.

All people, all tribes, all lands of the Congo have formed Leopoldville. From Equateur came the proud Mongo, the Bangala of the prompt gestures, the high-voiced Ngombe; from Orientale came lip-tattooed Topode, the Lokele who live with their pitoque-canoes in the form of a house, the Mangbetu whose elongated heads are like sugar-loaves. The Baluba, proud of their ancient empire, have arrived from the frontiers of Kasai, and the plains of Katanga. The squat, dumpy Bayaka, the Batshioko mask-carvers, the laughing Bapende, the taciturn Bas-Congo, all these peoples

have come descending river and stream, following road and trail by transport and by foot, bearing cover and mat, to sleep there, where destiny has led them. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Ethnic, linguistic and cultural differences cause a double tension. The first tension is the desire to preserve these differences. The city to a casual observer is like an enormous patchwork quilt made up of different groupings from the different regions of the Congo. Some of the larger groupings, or tribes, can swallow up whole sections of the city and smaller groups will band together in and around these sections. A Congolese, new to the city, might be at a total loss to communicate in many sections of the city if he does not speak French or a trade language. The older people maintain the tension by working to protect the unique qualities of their tribe. The other tension is to learn to live together. Generally, people in the city know that they must subdue their tribal affiliations and interests and associate themselves with larger groupings. Political leaders and young people are leaders in this movement. Politicians realize that the survival of their career depends on their ability to have a larger following and young people are more concerned about their future than their heritage.

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<sup>1</sup>Philippa Schuyler, *Who Killed the Congo* (New York: Devin-Adair, 1962), p. 70.

These two tensions are felt in every area of life. A company often has workers who are predominantly from one tribe, since workers will force out those of other tribes and recommend prospective employees to their employer from their own family or clan. Those Congolese in government, responsible for hiring for different agencies, are harrassed by their family, clan, and tribe until their people are hired. Local churches often adopt the language of the group they serve and others do not feel welcome. Since the development of schools in the city depend on a certain amount of initiative at the local level, these too can be somewhat tribal.

On the other hand, political parties, labor unions, alumni associations, larger church associations, professional groups, groups with a social concern, sports, etc. all help to bring people together in common causes. Two forces that have served to bring the city together deserve special mention. One is the military which does not generally discriminate according to tribes. To develop a national loyalty and to keep various units from becoming loyal to regions or leaders of regions, the soldiers of different tribes are continually mixed. This not only helps the individual man, but affects their attitude as they keep order. They are not usually keeping order among people of their own tribe and any discrimination

would bring retaliation.

Second, the trade language, lingala, gives a medium of communication. This language was derived from dialects used by river tribes in the middle Congo and has spread all along the Congo River. It not only is the trade language of Kinshasa but is the field language for the army. This language has become the first language for the young people and many will not make an effort to learn their tribal and village languages. This is especially true if their grouping is one of the smaller tribes. Politicians and businessmen use it to appeal to a larger segment of the population.

Educated Congolese accept French as a superior means of communicating, not only because of its flexibility and sophistication, but because it provides terminology adequate for government and business. Also, it provides a written body of knowledge to which they can refer.

#### I. VILLAGE-CLAN

To understand the urban dwellers of Africa, it is necessary to look at the setting out of which they came. In other areas of the world where urbanization is not new and the urban people have had a generation or two of experience in the city, their families are no longer involved in rural life and rural mores have very little

effect on their life in the city.

However, this city has sprung up in the last few years on land where nineteenth-century explorers had found nothing but primeval forest, and the Congolese who inhabit this city clearly stand with one foot in the city and one foot in the bush. Sometimes they shift their weight to the foot in the city and sometimes it rests on the one in the bush, but this is their stance. There are a few who would profess to have placed both feet in the city, but this does not occur easily. One cannot shed his immediate past with a flick of the wrist. Even the children, who have never visited the village of their clan, cannot deny the influence of their parents who are firmly rooted in the clan. Therefore we must consider the familial background out of which these people came and what happens as the mores of the bush meet the Western ways of the city.

The unit which has the most influence on the individual Congolese and which will be considered in this section is the clan. The lineage of the clan is matriarchal in origin and development. This is borne out in all the divisions of the clan into families. Each subdivision begins from a woman. The girls increase the clan, while the boys rule it. Men cannot increase the clan, for their children always belong to their wives' maternal

uncles, who are members of other clans.

Father Van Wing defines the clan as the uterine descendants of a common ancestress. It includes the individuals of both sexes who live underneath or above the earth, the dead and the living, who have received the blood of the ancestress, either directly from her or from one of the female descendants . . . The males are incapable of transmitting the blood of the clan . . . A clan is immortal. A village can be extinguished, but not a clan. There will always be the ancestors beneath the ground in their ancestral villages, and there will always be the clan mothers under the sky, who will furnish human wealth . . .<sup>2</sup>

The father does not belong to the same clan as his children. He belongs to his own mother's clan. Congolese follow the custom of patrilocal residence with the wife living in the husband's village and their children growing up playing the children of the father's clan. Often the clan into which the woman marries is a sub-division of the same village and the children know the other children of their clan, but when she marries into the clan of another village, she must carefully teach them who are the members of their clan, since they are playing with children of other clans.

Marriage partners do not decide who their partners will be. These arrangements are made between the ruling uncles, and the uncles on the man's side pay a price for the bride. The women always speak of "our village" as the

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<sup>2</sup>Ruth Engwall and Martin Engwall, "A 40-Year Study on Hungana Tribe and Related Tribes," p. 9 of Chapter 18.

one where their maternal uncles live, yet many of them have never lived there. As a child, the girl lives in her father's village, and as a married woman in her husband's, and only as a widow or divorcee will she go to live in the village of her clan.

Martin S. Engwall, in an extensive study of the "Status of Women in a Matrilineal Society," could find no case in which the woman did the ruling.

The uterine mother is thought of as the vessel, or the container of the clan, for through her the clan traced its descent, back to their ancestress. They do not pray to her for she is only a vessel. Her grave is unmarked, and not visited.<sup>3</sup>

The mother's oldest brother is the important maternal uncle of her children, while all her other brothers are also maternal uncles to her children. These men own their sister's children. All who earn money give it to this maternal uncle. There was a time when the woman would not share her earnings with her husband, but would turn it over to her clan. This is breaking down today and often the woman keeps her own earnings, however meager they might be. Seldom does she share them with her husband. The children, when they begin earning, also give their money to this maternal uncle, not their father. The graves of the dead maternal uncles are visited and

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<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, Chapter 2.

special ceremonies performed when asking them for help.

Before continuing, the word "tribe" needs to be considered. Most of the material on this area of Africa talks about tribes. Not trying to be definitive, it can be said that a tribe is made up of many clans who possess the same language, ethnic background, and relatively the same culture. Some tribes are small with only a few clans and others spread over thousands of square miles and involve many clans. Often women feel a greater loyalty to their clan than to their husband, and this is the unit which lays the strongest claim on the individual. Next comes tribal loyalties. A tribe consciously maintains a feeling of separateness from other tribes and expresses it in terms of fear, mistrust, or even hostility.

Sometimes the feeling has its basis in the historic fact of conquest or feud, but as often as not it expresses a strong desire to maintain separateness, to preserve tribal traditions intact, rather than any actual hostility. In this sense it is a kind of indigenous "apartheid."<sup>4</sup>

The responsibilities of the marriage partners is clearly defined in the village. The husband is to provide a house and cloth for his wife, cut down the forest that is to become the family garden, and provide a few palm nuts for oil and occasionally fish and meat. The most

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<sup>4</sup>Colin M. Turnbull, *The Lonely African* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), p. 245.

important provision is for the husband to give his wife children. If she does not conceive, her clan must take her back. In marriage the husband acquires or buys her sexual qualities, and she cannot refuse him relations except when she is nursing a child. Often a child will be nursed for two to three years. Adultery is a form of theft. For her ownership of the children the wife is expected to furnish all of the food for her husband and children. At the same time she must care for her husband's private garden, market the produce and turn the money over to him.

One of the results of the clan organization is that it divides the interest of husband and wife, so that they have very little in common except sex relations. When decisions are to be made the husband makes it. If there is mismanagement of the affairs of the clan there is no recourse. It is very possible for a maternal uncle to squander the clan fortunes and the members of the clan would have to accept this fate.

An advantage of the clan organization is the togetherness they feel and the concern they have for one another. The social security factor in life is handled by the clan.

One other aspect of village life that needs to be considered is the use of leisure time. During the day

the majority of people leave the village and only a few children or older people are to be found there. Men go to the forest to hunt or fish, collect their palm wine from the trees, bathe in the river, or take care of whatever business they might have outside of the village. The women work their own and their husband's gardens, bathe the children in the river, collect firewood, and pound their manioc flour.

After the heat of the day, the women prepare supper, the men eat, and then the women and children have their meal. In the evening small fires are maintained in front of every house and small groups meet to talk over the day's activities. The leading uncles meet around their fire, the boys around theirs, and the girls around theirs. The mothers will meet around another. The village is broken down by status into small groups around the fires.

Sometimes there might be dancing or joking to pass the evening. Other times stories of the past are shared or bits of news gleaned during the daytime are gossiped over. Every single event is talked over thoroughly and each person expresses his feelings about the event. All problems are presented and worried over. The *bambuta*, elder uncles, work through all the matters confronting the clan and make their decisions. The women, young people, and children discuss their interests, present their needs

and settle conflicts with their peers. These small groups are an essential part of keeping life in order and maintaining rapport in the community.

## II. URBAN MIGRATION

There are many reasons why these people come to the city and hang on to this life rather than returning to the security of their home village. One of the major ones is to find work in order to pay for some specific goods which they desire. Before independence, except for the slight recession of 1956, employment was close to 100%. A man had to have a job before he could come to the city or his immatriculation card for the city would not be validated. Therefore, those who lived in the city were the people with wealth. In spite of the economic chaos, wealth is still synonymous with life in the city, and if one wants to buy new clothing, purchase a radio, complete his payments for his wife, or have money for any other reason, he will come to the city. There is no doubt that one will not become "affluent" living in the bush.

A second reason people come to the city is to find education. Fifty percent of the young people across the nation are in primary school. Ten percent of the graduates will be able to continue into another school but ninety percent who have been lifted this much through education

to see a better way of life will be dropped for the lack of schools. Many who are good students and ambitious will be sent to the city by their family or will come on their own to look for a school. Few find a school that can take them, but they hang on in the city year after year, hoping.

There are those who are adventurous and come for the prestige of having been there. Others come because they are outcasts of the village and drift to the city. Those who cannot accommodate themselves to the will of the chiefs, others who steal or are troublesome, or those who no longer follow the superstitions of the village can be considered undesirables and literally pushed out of the village.

The majority of the secondary schools are in the bush and not in the cities. Young people who have had the good fortune of studying in these schools usually come to the city to fulfill their aspirations. For a young person who has finished secondary school there is little opportunity for him to use his studies in the bush, and if he desires an occupation equal to his education, or if he has the means to continue his studies he must make his contacts in the city.

The tribal system makes it easy for one to visit the city. Those who are already living there are expected to support their relatives and friends who are visiting.

It is an obligation that one must fulfill, and he would be disgraced if he did not. This can often become a hardship for those who are conscientious on matters of family responsibility or unadept at moving out those who hang on.

Most of the people coming to the city plan to return to the village. But for many the heady wine of freedom, excitement, and amusements of the metropolis, make it impossible to return to the work and quiet evenings around the fire in the village. Many women loathe to return to the village where they must keep a large garden and gather firewood rather than go to the market, carry water from the river rather than buy it close at hand, and literally provide for the basic needs of her family, rather than manage them from her husband's wages.

There are other women who would love to return to the village. In the city their husbands do not have a job, and they must work even harder to support their family. Everyday men and women stream miles and miles out of the city where they have found a place to keep a garden and cut firewood, and this produce must be hauled back many hot miles on one's head. Part of this is sold in the market and part of it is consumed by the family. In spite of the hardships, however, the city continues to mushroom. Through the years, up until 1959, when a record of the population of Kinshasa was kept, there was one

woman for every two men living in the city, and there is no reason to believe that this ratio is not true today.

The founders and developers of Kinshasa were not concerned with developing an enormous village for all who would come, but in developing government and business. Many developers in other African colonies would only bring men to these kinds of centers and provide for them in barracks, but the Belgians encouraged "families" to move to the city on a permanent basis, provided housing or an allowance to build a home, in order to cut down on the turnover of workers. Every new worker had to be trained, so they were interested in keeping their trained men in the city. In spite of this encouragement, the ratio has remained lop-sided.

Men seeking employment come alone to establish themselves before sending for their families. Some send for their families, but others, not finding work or enjoying the freedom of the urban society never send for them. Some wives then scrape the money together to make the trip on their own, find their husbands, and settle in the city. Others are never united again.

The education of boys is considered more important than girls. So, bright, ambitious boys are sent to a relative in the city to continue their education. This continually adds to the male population.

Since there are no hotels or boarding houses available to Congolese, the working men and students migrating to Kinshasa usually move in with a family who are already established in the city. The two major needs are a place to sleep and a woman's presence to prepare the food. A household becomes even more attractive if the man has a job. In the bush the husband can invite people to come and his wife must provide food for the guests, but in the city, his salary must provide the food and the responsibility falls on both of their shoulders. Since guests can come from both clans, the hosts eventually come to resent the pressure and involvement with their clans. Some marriage relationships grow under this pressure but many disintegrate.

The second most common way for a man to live in the urban society is to live with a *femme libre*. One woman can have one man, and this is common among younger people; but many have several men living with them. The men contribute to the household, and she takes care of all of their needs. Students will often live together in a house and hire a woman to prepare their food.

### III. THE FAMILY

A visitor to the Congo will often ask the Congolese about the health of his family. The Congolese immediately

becomes involved in analyzing the health of all of his relatives. When the visitor said "family" the Congolese thought "clan." They do not have the Western concept of family. Even though a husband and wife and their children may not be living in clan territory, they are still an extension of their two clans.

But urbanization and westernization contain elements which demand detribalization and loosening of clan bonds. The husband becoming a wage-earner, the wife buying food in the market, the distance between the village and city, neighbors from other tribes, lack of garden space, new kinds of entertainment, all change the relationship of the marriage partners.

The values and structures of the clan in the village are no longer relevant to life in the city. Some couples imaginatively work through the problems and establish homes where there is love, respect, and security. Healthy children are raised and given a good education. Many other couples see their relationship, established on village customs disintegrate and they separate. In between these two extremes there are all kinds of situations bringing various degrees of happiness and disappointment.

There are very few studies being made of the African family in the urban situation. Other nations are much more interested in the politics and economics of

these countries and studies revolve around these topics. What is learned about the family is incidental. The studies that are being made are not based on scientific methods and the results are superficial. However, some contributions can be gleaned from the writings of those who are working in other urban areas. Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Phillips spent a life-time working with urban-dwellers in South Africa and point out seven reasons for the very high rate of desertion among these people.<sup>5</sup> These reasons reveal many of the problems that confront the families in the urban situation.

1. Illegitimate babies in the village belong to the girl's clan and the maternal uncle of the boy involved has to pay a very heavy fine to the clan of the girl for having stolen her powers of reproduction. In the city, neither clan will take the responsibility for the child but they force the boy and girl to marry. Marriages are hastily arranged, the couple moves into a corner of one of their parent's households, and life together begins. Usually there is discord, not necessarily between the partners, but in the whole household, and it is not uncommon for one or the other to walk out.

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<sup>5</sup> Wesley and Dora Phillips, "Marriage, Divorce, and Parental Control in the Urban Non-European Family" (Mimeographed).

2. In the village both husband and wife were busy all day taking care of their responsibilities and there was not much free time. In the city, while the husband is at work, the wife goes to market but generally has more time for leisure. In many cases the woman has a garden out of the city, sells a little produce in the market, and spends a lot of time away from home. Suspicions arise as to the faithfulness of each under these new circumstances, and often immorality is suspected. In the anonymity of a big city where a person is unknown to even those living in the same neighborhood, the temptations are many, and it is easy to be unfaithful. As a result, trust and faith in each other disintegrate and one of the parties deserts the home.

3. The meaning of partnership in the Western sense is not understood. This is especially true with handling of finances when there is so little to disperse and prices are high. It is also evident in raising the children when the decision has to be made as to who owns the children and who is responsible for their needs and discipline. Constant nagging and recrimination leads to the despairing conclusion that the whole situation is hopeless and that escape is the only solution.

4. Unemployment runs high and often a woman will find means of supplementing the income to such an extent

that she is the principle wage earner. She begins to want privileges that are not understood nor accepted by a man who was taught to make the decisions for the family. The wife no longer conforms to the old pattern which he expects of her, it is keenly resented, and she finds another husband.

5. The "bride price," paid by the boy's maternal uncle to the girl's maternal uncle, in the village is more than the buying of a wife. It is an assurance that the girl will perform as she should as a wife. Her clan will see that she will function as a wife should or they will return the "bride price." It creates an alliance between the families. In the city the "bride price" tends to become a way of making money and can often be quite unreasonable. Often the boy does not have his uncle's approval and goes into debt to the girl's father. Then comes a long period of irritation as the father pressures his son-in-law for the money. Sometimes the pressure is unreasonable and in disgust he sends her back to her father.

6. In village society, if a woman could not produce children, her sister could take over this responsibility, another wife could be taken, or this woman could be returned. The barren woman would always have the territory of her clan to which she could return to live. In the city these unfortunate women are at the mercy of

their husband and many are deserted. Unable to return to their village they become a *femme libre*.

7. Living facilities are totally inadequate in the city. In the bush a man could cut sticks and erect a house within a couple of days, but in the city even the flimsiest building materials cost a fortune, and the houses in the enormous squatter zone are pitiful. The norm is for every square inch of floor space to be taken up for sleeping area at night. There is little opportunity for marriage partners to have the privacy necessary to work out the problems confronting them in the city. Tensions grow as disagreements arise and the partners spend as little time at home as necessary because of the unhappy situation and soon one deserts.

Although most marriages are registered with the government and entered into the legal documents of each couple, the couples find it easier just to separate and not bother about a legal separation. They go and live with someone else for a while until that arrangement becomes unattractive, and then find another mate. With the beginning of the development of a permanent urban society or culture, this is one of the urgent problems confronting the city.

There is one other nagging problem with which the Congolese is faced. He was confronted with this problem

in the bush, but had help in resolving the issues. In the city he faces this problem by himself. Through the education system set up by the missions and supported by the government, and through contact with people foreign to the Bantu culture, the Congolese has been taught to regard his old faith as unscientific, superstitious nonsense. This process of education, whether formal or through experience, continues at a more accelerated rate in the city. Some change their convictions about life and accept some form of monotheism or atheism, but the majority become deeply confused and can no longer sort out their underlying convictions about life. The cutting edge of westernization is materialism in the city. The last strongholds of self-respect, of morality, of belief and faith can be leveled with a piece of cloth or a pack of cigarettes.

On the surface an urban dweller may acknowledge the practical benefits that will accrue as a result of westernization, but even this can be halfhearted as he admits the disintegration of moral and spiritual values that come with detribalization and the loss of faith in the old ways.

In the towns there is virtually no belief, only a way of life that the majority must accept. There is no belief because in being forced to abandon traditional beliefs, in being taught skepticism, even shame, for tribal ways, the African has learned to be

equally skeptical of western beliefs and ways. He behaves as he does because of convenience or expediency. Values disintegrate because the old values, which were not so very different from our own, were based on tribal love that is now considered, by the sophisticated African, to be part of his regrettable past. The "new" values find no bedrock of belief on which they can establish themselves, and are not assumed with the rest of the trappings of western civilization. The result is a terrible degeneration, a lack of morality that was never known before. Vice of every kind is practiced without shame.<sup>6</sup>

For example, theft is an accepted part of urban life. Prostitution, both male and female, are acceptable ways of earning a living. When a mother or father are no longer able to support their six, eight, or ten children they can slip over into one of these trades in order to keep the family together, and feel no shame in the city.

Seen from this standpoint the city leads to a degradation of Bantu civilization and ethics as faith in the religion, mores, and traditions of the village disappears. From another point of view this period of transition can contain the seeds of a more interesting and diversified civilization, with the possibility of greater liberty, but the possibilities look more discouraging than encouraging, and at this stage in the process of urbanization it takes an optimist to see any glimmer of moral and spiritual values.

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<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 125.

This is the need and it will not be easily met. As the Congolese has been made skeptical of his past, he has also become skeptical of any new faith that has been offered to him. With the church, commerce, and government having been united in an alliance for colonizing the land, the church is going to have to present its faith in new dimensions that are meaningful to these people.

One last observation about the city needs to be made. In the village the evening was spent around the fires reviewing the day and its events. It was a time of intimacy, when there was fun and yet the serious concerns of life were shared. This is generally lost in urbanization. Wood is hard to find and the fire is replaced by a kerosene lamp. The small barren yard and house are filled with people and any kind of coherent conversation is difficult. As a result, those who are free, walk the streets and look for distractions. One of the most convenient distractions is the bar. In 1959 there was one bar for every 400 people in the city. As the city increased in size the number of bars increased and now they are on both sides of every street and on the four corners of every block. Each bar has a cheap record player and the larger have bands to entertain the customers. When there is no chair at home there is a table and chair available in the large courtyard. There are no statistics

available as to the percentage of people who frequent bars, but if the throngs who move in and out are any indication of their importance, it is no doubt that they are the social centers of the city.

#### IV. RELIGION

To summarize the religious background of the inhabitants of Kinshasa poses one major problem. The tribes that these people represent are scattered over many square miles and the variations of their beliefs are as numerous as the languages these people use. Furthermore, not having pre-colonial written records, it is difficult to tell what is African and what has been taken from the Arabs moving to the Congo from the East and Europeans moving in from the West.

The variations in belief and external influences are evident in their belief in a higher being. Some tribes place extreme importance on a higher being as the creator of the universe. Others emphasize that there is a higher being that is in all things and maintains order in the universe. Still others project that this higher being is a moral god whose only purpose is to intervene in daily life and punish those who fail to abide by his laws. Most tribes are in accord that there is a higher being, but it seems that the advent of missionaries has

raised the higher being's level of importance.

Andersson points out that the first missionaries wrote about encountering the belief in fetishes but "not until the year 1889 was Nzambi, as creator and God of the thunder, mentioned in missionaries' letters."<sup>7</sup> In fact this name, Nzambi, was probably brought by missionaries from Upper Guinea and spread in the Congo.

Today, it is generally believed that Nzambi created the world and human beings and is the maintainer of his creation. With the help of fetishes, which he has sent for man's assistance, he brings health and strength but also sickness and suffering. When older people have had enough of life he calls them to himself. "Nzambi is also the source of laws and the guardian of justice among human beings."<sup>8</sup> Oaths are taken inviting death by Nzambi if one is telling a lie. His name might be used in a threat to force one to act prudently and justly.

The animistic society of Congo recognizes Nzambi, but does not worship him. They fear the evil spirits and worship the spirits of their ancestors. Christian translators and Bible scholars have used Nzambi as their term

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<sup>7</sup>Efraim Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo* (Uppsala: Almqvist and Wiksells, 1958), p. 12.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 13.

for God. Therefore, many of the more complex attributes of God are carried back into the animistic society from the Christian churches and bring about new "nativistic religions."

More important to the animist are the good and evil spirits that are in the world. These spirits inhabit all forms of life and can regenerate, upon the death of one form, into another form. Howell points out that generally the evil spirits that inhabit people cannot join the spirits of those who have lived a good life.<sup>9</sup> The evil spirits return in the form of bats, sorcerers, trouble-makers, etc. The good can join the true clan of ancestral spirits, a counterpart of the living clan, that is located underground somewhere. The village above ground and the village below ground are really all one clan and they have reciprocal interests. Without the help of the good spirits, the village above ground would perish at the hands of the evil spirits and without the village above ground, the village below ground would leave the good spirits isolated from the earth and they would fade away. Thus the ancestors can demand industry and moral strength.

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<sup>9</sup>William Howells, *The Heathens, Primitive Man, and His Religions* (New York: Doubleday, 1948), p. 176.

The Bantu demand moral behavior within the family and tribe rather than moral behavior in general. And this is in complete harmony with their ancestor worship, for the common ancestor must of necessity resent any action by one of his descendants likely to harm another descendant and incidentally to upset the social order within the group.<sup>10</sup>

The living are within their rights in expecting the ancestors to keep them in good health, help them to have children, make them aware of their enemies, protect their gardens, and help them hunt and fish. There are many different rituals used as the living approach their ancestors at the graveyards and present these needs. Evil spirits sometimes return to earth in the form of a person to create unhappiness and make people suffer. Early missionaries and traders were often put in this category and shunned by the villagers.

All kinds of fetishes are used to give a person extra power to overcome his fears or needs. The name, fetish, is apparently derived from "a French mispronunciation of the Portuguese word *feitico*, for sorcery."<sup>11</sup> They are not worshipped, but after being prepared by a spiritual leader they are used for magic. The formula for preparing or finding a fetish is a secret and is handed

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<sup>10</sup>Edward Norbeck, *Religion in Primitive Society* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961), p. 173.

<sup>11</sup>Howells, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

down from father to son as the son learns to work with the spirit world.

There are generally two kinds of "spiritual dignitaries" in the villages. Both of them have the word *nganga* in their title. This is the word used to designate "a man who acts as an intermediary between his people and the supernatural powers."<sup>12</sup> One kind is a true medicine man who knows the secret potions necessary to make a man well. He is usually a good herbalist and passes this knowledge down from father to son. The power to know these kinds of secrets is considered hereditary.

The second kind of *nganga* uses his special power as a diviner or shamanistic seer. One of the most common ways to practice this art is to excite the people to a frenzy through the use of drums and dancing and then quickly point out the one who caused another's illness or committed a crime.

So far the discussion has been generally about the religion of the people outside of Christian influence. As of August 1, 1945, Sundkler had identified a total of 847 native, separatist churches in Africa and then reports an additional 123 discovered during the ensuing two years. There are no figures for Congo or Kinshasa, but as one

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<sup>12</sup>Andersson, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

travels the streets of that city, small signs on houses, store fronts, and grass buildings indicate hundreds of sects that fill the spectrum from animism to Christianity. With the advent of independence many of the churches or sects are deliberate interpretations of Christianity after native beliefs. One deviation after another has split off from either end of the spectrum.

One example is the sect of the prophetess Mantsupa. Although she had never met a missionary or been inside a church, undoubtedly some of her teachings had to be found outside of the Bantu beliefs and clearly came from the Christian tradition. She even charged her people to be faithful to the Christian church by attending worship and not to oppose the spread of the Gospel. One of her major prophecies was that within the near future there would be a period of general peace "où personne n'exercera plus autorité sur ses frères, le fils de Dieu régnant en Maître souverain sur les peuples."<sup>13</sup> Her other prophecies and teachings clearly come from the Bantu tradition.

Another example is the sect "kimbanguism," which is undoubtedly the largest of these groups in Congo. Simon Kimbangu was born in the 1890's and raised in the village of Nkamba, about 150 miles to the West of Kinshasa. After

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<sup>13</sup> Andersson, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

being raised in the Baptist Church and teaching as a catechist for some time, he supposedly had a series of dreams in which God forced him to respond to the call of being a prophet. At first his teachings were quite orthodox, but a major part of his time was spent holding healing services and speaking in tongues. Shaking was a part of the ritual. The revival that he created spread all over that part of Congo and mission services were filled with many people coming forward for baptism.

Eventually the missionaries would not accept the movement because of the healing and tongues, and the government was concerned because so many people were leaving their work to visit his village. The government's distrust and missionaries' reluctance engendered anti-white feeling among the Kimbanguists which in turn brought on more distrust. This grew to the point where the government exiled Kimbangu.

With this loss to the movement other leaders started to rebuild the group on Kimbangu's imminent return and the belief that they now had a black messiah. Over the years the movement has splintered into many different groups. Some are steeped in Bantu magic and call Kibangu a messiah while others adhere very closely to orthodox Christian doctrine and treat the prophet as a special pastor or evangelist that was misunderstood. There are

no records available, but it is highly possible that the Kimbanguist movement in Kinshasa has more adherents than any one of the major denominations.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE CHURCH IN KINSHASA

The number of people who consider themselves Christians in the city of Kinshasa is unknown. At the time of independence, across the nation eight percent of the Congolese were Protestant, thirty-five percent were Catholic, and the percentage who belong to other groups was not studied or recorded.<sup>1</sup> With the loss of missionaries after independence and the struggles of a rebellion, it is probably that neither of the known percentages have increased. If we use these same percentages in the city of Kinshasa, believing that the city is representative of the people across the nation, one could estimate the number of inhabitants who were formerly related to the Catholic and Protestant churches in the rural area. This would mean that approximately 545,000 inhabitants were Catholic and 124,000 inhabitants were Protestant. The accuracy of this is questionable, but it does give a reasonable estimate of the number of adherents to the different faiths. These figures can be compared with present attendance to judge the effectiveness of the

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<sup>1</sup>Crawford Young, *Politics in the Congo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 10.

church in the city for holding its adherents.

The Catholic Church has been an integral part of the government since the establishment of the colony and continues to hold a favorable position since independence. There is some friendliness but little working relationship between the Catholic and Protestant Churches in the city. The Catholic Church is in the midst of developing thirty-three new parishes in and around Kinshasa. This study will not include the Catholic Church.

#### I. PROTESTANT DENOMINATIONS

The Protestant Church was established by mission societies and although each denomination which has resulted from their work is self-governing, except for the Salvation Army, there are many ways in which they continue to depend on the mission societies. For instance, they depend on the missions for translation and development of materials, theological education, and permanent buildings.

There are four major denominations that work in Kinshasa: American Baptists, British Baptists, Presbyterians, and the Salvation Army. The first three adhere to a comity arrangement and work in separate parts of the city while the Salvation Army works in all of the sections.

There are several Pentecostal groups, Seventh Day Adventists, and the Swedish Mission which have started

churches in the squatter zone. Every mission across the Congo, as it works with the different tribes in the rural areas, is under pressure to start a church for the people from that tribe in the city. Under the comity arrangement, those churches which are already in the city are supposed to minister to all tribes, so they resist the importing of new denominations. In reality, the city churches are fairly tribal and do not help others to feel at home. Often the language used for worship is limited to one tribe and those who speak another language do not enjoy the work of trying to understand a strange language. Therefore, they want tribal fellowships like those they have known in their own rural areas, which would worship in the various tribal languages and dialects.

In Chapter III it was pointed out that there are mushrooming in Kinshasa a myriad of national movements, prophetic movements, and African religions more or less related to Christianity. Everywhere there are small chapels and meeting areas for these various groups.

The Kimbanguist Prophet Movement is undoubtedly the largest denomination in the city. It not only has regular worship services but schools subsidized by the government. This organization has little or no dialogue with the Christian Church, but some of these churches within this sect project a theology that is not too

different from that of the Protestant Church. For instance, in 1935, when the Salvation Army started working in Congo, the Kimbanguist Movement was at a low ebb. The brassy bands and bright uniforms were interpreted as a sign of the imminent return of Simon Kimbangu. Therefore every Salvation Army rally was swamped with his followers who wanted to hear the message.

The natives were dazzled by all the grandeur and glory. Missionaries, wearing uniforms like those of officers . . . singing their hymns to brass and stringed instruments and, better still, the music of the drums . . . it was all perfectly attuned to the Black mentality.<sup>2</sup>

The theology of these two groups was compatible enough for the relationship to continue for seven years. The break finally came over the use of magic.

To give a more complete picture of the church in Kinshasa a look at existing statistics from the four major denominations is helpful. Because so few records are kept, the figures are not completely accurate, but they do assist in visualizing the size of the church in this city of approximately 1,550,000 people. There are absolutely no figures available about finances, or information about the age, sex distribution in the church,

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<sup>2</sup>Efraim Andersson, *Messianic Popular Movements in the Lower Congo* (Uppsala: Almquist and Wiksells, 1958), p. 126.

and no one available who would hazard a guess.

The miscellaneous column in the following table includes two Pentecostal groups that are active in the city. Their presence was sharply felt when they convinced two Presbyterian churches to leave their own denomination and join with them. These groups have also established legal status with the government which means they are officially recognized. Also included in the miscellaneous column is a group started by the Swedish Mission and the group of Seventh Day Adventists.

Two churches which are included under the British Baptist column have also left that denomination. A free-lance Swiss missionary representing a very conservative group in Switzerland promised these two churches the new buildings which they needed if they would withdraw from the British Baptists. The churches withdrew, but the promises proved to be hollow. Now these churches have asked to join the American Baptists.

There is also a church for Europeans and Americans that conducts its services in both French and English. There are some Africans who come to these services, but practically speaking this church is completely separate from the Congolese church. Some missionaries frequent services at both the Congolese and this church, but these two are unrelated organizationally, or in sharing any

TABLE I

STATISTICS ON FOUR MAJOR RELIGIONS AND TWO PENTECOSTAL  
GROUPS (MISCELLANEOUS) IN KINSHASA

	American Baptists	British Baptists	Presby- terian	Salva- tion Army	Misc.
Total Membership	1,322	6,229	4,500	6,000*	
Number of Pastors	5	6	4		6
Number of Pastors Teach- ing School	4	1	1		
Number of Missionaries Full-Time	3		2	10*	2
Number of Churches	8	10	8	8*	6*
Number of Churches Self- Supporting	2	3	2		6
Number of Primary School Students	2,000*	4,500*	5,800	10,000*	250*
Number of Secondary Sch. Students	200		364		
Number of Sunday Sch. Students	300*	4,500*	1,120		

\* Estimated.

projects.

With these many groups at work, often against each other rather than in a combined effort, there is real disorganization in the ranks of Protestants. There is no organization working to tie these groups together except "COPAL" which is a monthly meeting of the pastors of the various churches. Attendance at these meetings is very poor, interest is low, and the organization is fairly ineffectual in solving inter-church difficulties and staging cooperative programs. This could not be considered a power group.

## II. PASTOR-LAYMEN RELATIONSHIP

It does not take much study to realize that the church in this city is disorganized and weak, and does not measure up to the needs of the city. The rural church in Congo is much stronger, well organized and meets the needs of the people living in the many villages. Eight percent of the people in the rural areas belong to the Protestant Church. However, when they migrate to the city, less than one percent become affiliated with a Protestant Church.

The pastors who are ministering in the city have not been trained for an urban ministry, but were trained in the country for a rural ministry. Almost 100 percent

of these pastors were effective pastors in the bush and therefore called to the city. However, only one of these men has studied beyond high school and therefore they find themselves lost as to how to minister to an urban society. The few pastors in the Congo who have studied a year or so on the university level are all being used in administrative tasks of the denominations or have been sent to a large post in the bush.

The majority of the laymen do not feel that the pastors understand their problems or that they are ministering to their needs. The elite who are employed in government or industry are men of the city and do not care to affiliate with the church. There is a great deal of hostility between them and the church. The church feels that they should at least support the program, since most of them were educated in mission schools, but the laymen do not respond.

### III. CURRENT PROJECTS

Dr. Earl Cressy, retired American Baptist Missionary to the Far East, has been guiding a research project on these laymen and has discovered that they are well-organized in associations outside of the church. The associations are called alumni associations and each one represents the graduates of a particular mission school in the bush.

Since most of the men in the city were educated in the bush before independence, every man with any education can join one of these associations. This means that the elite, who have abandoned their affiliation with the church, continue to be related to a group educated by the church. One of the recent goals adopted by these associations is to appoint pastors out of their own group and organize their own churches. One group has already purchased land to build a sanctuary.

Dr. Cressy is now funding a project in Kinshasa of listing in a book all of the alumni associations and their members. It is an enormous task, but already demonstrating the extensiveness of the membership of these associations and the power and prestige of the members. The full extent of this movement is unknown but its size in combined membership could easily equal that of the present church if the wives and children of the men were counted.

There has been one significant interdenominational project that needs to be mentioned. Two years ago a Christian and Missionary Alliance missionary persuaded COPAL to request that his mission purchase, equip, and maintain a tent for the churches in the capital. Now this tent is being used by local groups for evangelistic services. These local groups must plan the services and make all arrangements for the equipment.

These campaigns are planned entirely by the local congregations, generally a Salvation Army and a Baptist or Presbyterian group. Lingala is preached one week, Kikongo the next. Good singing, testimonies by solid Christians, special music and evangelistic messages by evangelists chosen by the local pastors, followed by a call to repentance and salvation, mark the services. In these first two campaigns, over two hundred decisions for Christ were recorded, and personal workers were assigned to each of these for continuing encouragement in the Lord.<sup>3</sup>

As of July, 1967, there were 1,100 decisions recorded. The tent seats from 500 to 700 people and is equipped with its own power and light. Literature is made available, and people can sign up for correspondence courses.

One of the positive effects is that it is helping the pastors and laymen to consider the people outside of the church membership. There are vast stretches of city between church buildings. In this new way the church is beginning to contact these people, and some have responded. The success of gaining a response does help overcome the withdrawn attitude of the church.

A more controversial development is a project implemented by a missionary, Don Bobb, who had to disassociate himself from the Southern Presbyterian Board in order to continue his project. This missionary estimated in

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<sup>3</sup>Arni Shareski, "You Need a Tent," *Congo Mission News*: Journal of the Congo Protestant Council, No. 213 (July--September, 1966), 9.

1963 that there were over 100,000 young people in the city who for all practical purposes had severed relations with their families, did not have jobs, and could not find a place in a school. Knowing that these young people were not frequenting the churches, he felt compelled to develop an approach that would go out and find them where they are.

The unwed mother, the youth who has innocently become slave to hemp smoking, the pre-delinquent and would-be criminal, the boy who steals out of hunger and desperation, the boy who forges a school certificate or falsifies his age in order to find a place in school.<sup>4</sup>

This missionary's philosophy is that missions establish hospitals and schools to minister to the millions in the bush who were in need of these services, but now the need is for social services in the city. With the very same spirit of the past fifty years

the church and the missions in Congo must not turn deafened ears and blind eyes to the terrific and seemingly unsolvable social problems which threaten the progress and rapid development of this country.<sup>5</sup>

To meet these problems the *Carrefour des Jeunes* (Crossroads for Youth) was developed in an old, downtown building and modestly offered a library where students could study, a clinic for milk and vitamin distribution, evening classes and a program for girls who can for one reason or another no longer continue in school, an

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<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*

orphanage for abandoned children who need to be fed and clothed, a placement bureau to help capable young people find jobs, and help for those who need money for lodging, tuition, or bus tickets. Another phase of the program was to give leadership training to young people so they could work in various corners of the city and help other young people. After their training they continued to return for refresher courses and their work was organizationally related to the central *Carrefour*. Camps are being organized for the summertime for those who really need help. An example of a camping experience is the case of a young man who smoked hemp. One day in a discussion group he admitted his being an addict. This was the beginning of his breaking the habit, and soon he was working with others in camps to help them do likewise.

A major problem for the project has been support. The government was in total sympathy with the project and its aspirations but did not have one franc to put into it. The churches, having difficulty with pastors' salaries and buildings, could not help with the expenses. Therefore, a sponsoring committee under the leadership of Mr. Isaac Kalonji, President of the Congo Senate, and consisting of 25 influential people representing the financial, industrial, political, diplomatic and religious circles of the city took on the responsibility of support. They

arranged for over 400 people to make contributions. These contributors represented many nationalities, religions, faiths, and ideologies.

This means of support brought very heavy criticism from the Protestant community in the beginning, but Rev. Bobb expressed his concern that

the church not sit idly by on the sidelines, primly guarding her Victorian manners, refusing to soil her skirts by stepping down into the struggling, seething scene where the youth of Congo are grappling for status, for "a place in the sun"; not just an empty existence but a life with meaning; but rather, that the church will take the avant-garde, leading the way, blazing the trail in this new jungle of modern-day Africa, "passing the torch to a new generation" not only of people but of methods and ideas, that one day it may be said the church played her role in the development and stabilization of the Congo.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 20.

## CHAPTER V

### THE NATURE AND MISSION OF THE CHURCH

In the first four chapters, the city of Kinshasa has been studied in order to understand its development, and to discover some of the basic needs of the people. At the same time the availability of resources to meet these needs has been assessed. Certainly this study has not exhausted all needs and has not assessed all resources. However, it has presented the scope of concern this writer feels that the church of Kinshasa must have for that society, and the freedom the church should exercise in searching for resources to meet these basic needs.

The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the nature and mission of the church to the extent of demonstrating that an integral part of her nature is a broad ministry or mission that acts at all points of human need.

The church in the rural area accepts this perspective without question and is maintaining a broad ministry which includes not only an interpretation of the Word of God but also farm projects, schools, hospitals, family planning, etc.; and these are available to all people. The church in the city has retreated from this perspective. The new structures and the different set of

problems and need of urban society have obviously forced the church to retreat from a broad interpretation of her ministry. If the church is to be the community of Christ in that situation she must become more responsible in her mission.

The second purpose of this chapter will be to discuss several processes which must be present in the church if she is going to carry out its mission. There are social processes common to all communities that reflect the nature and mission of that community and which must be maintained if that community is going to exist. This is not to reduce the church to just any community and acknowledge her life as simple a historical community, but rather to attempt to understand those processes within society that operate and determine the form that the church will take in Kinshasa. These processes should be both accepted and encouraged.

## I. THE NATURE OF THE CHURCH

It will be evident from the following discussion that the writer believes the church is called into being by God's act and maintained by His Word. Basically, this is her importance and justification for existence. But this relation to the divine is maintained only if the noncultural, transcendal elements in the church's life are

related continuously and creatively to the total daily life of man. As man is immersed in culture these transcendental elements must shape his life and culture in spite of the tension created. If the transcendental elements are affirmed but left unrelated to the culture, the church is irrelevant and has no useful purpose. Then the natural progression is for the transcendental elements to disappear and the church to follow suit.

It must be recognized that today is a critical era in the life of the church when she must discover a form of church life within the culture in which she can maintain her transcendental elements and yet accept the world, be relevant to a culture and yet not dominated by the standards and gods of that culture. Therefore, the following discussion involving the nature of the church is made with an awareness of the necessity of the church with her transcendental elements to be relevant to culture.

Langdon Gilkey, in writing *How the Church Can Minister to the World without Losing Itself*<sup>1</sup> provides an excellent discussion of this problem. His development of the nature of the church will be used extensively in the following discussion in conjunction with other leading

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<sup>1</sup>Langdon Gilkey, *How the Church Can Minister to the World without Losing Itself* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964).

writers.

The word used in the New Testament to symbolize the church was *ecclesia*. This immediately suggests a community that was unique in its calling and purpose, but in order to discern more of the nature of this community, one must look at the frame of reference of the early writers.

The thrust of the Old Testament as understood by the New Testament writers was that God had created a holy people in the children of Israel. Their development into a community was not by their own design, but by God's will. He was the primary force in their development. In just as real a way, the New Testament church sensed that she stood in this tradition of being called by God. Her emergence as a community was in direct lineage with the Old Testament community and was brought about by God's will in the fullness of time.

The early writers of the Christian church did not see the Old Testament community as a static group. Rather, they saw a maturing community which had started with external ceremonies and rites, and later included the prophetic emphasis on moral obedience. Thus, when the New Testament church called herself the "New Israel," she was proclaiming herself as the continuation of this magnificent history of God's creation of his holy people, as the unique community to be called God's holy people,

and as the fulfillment of the divine will for justice and love to one another.

The impact of Jesus Christ in history was that he took the center position, in place of divine law, and became an opportunity for all men to be brought into this community. In every dimension the old community was enlarged and made available to all men. It was a new beginning for all mankind. The presence of the Holy Spirit, manifested in love, was the basic requirement for membership in this new *ecclesia*.

Today, community suggests isolation or a group living apart from others, with its own institutions, loyalties, and commitments. Certainly this is true of the church as she has her own political processes, meaningful language, interpretations, and commitments which give her a uniqueness from other communities. But, community as it is used here is *koinonia*, a common inner life and spirit that is a result of the activity of the Holy Spirit. The church as the fellowship of the Holy Spirit immediately then suggests community, but in reality as we see in the New Testament and know from our own experience, community is not immediate. The church is responsible under the guidance of the Holy Spirit to discover this aspect of her personality. This depends not only on God, but on men of God. The unique characteristic

of this community is that it is redemptive, helping those in its midst to understand themselves, helping men to relate on the deepest levels of life, and affirming the God revealed in Christ in life.

Too often, with the emphasis on mass meetings and individual decisions, the community life, the togetherness, the *koinonia* dimension of the church is lost. Ross Snyder reminds us that community begins when we honestly care for one another.<sup>2</sup> To care for one another forces us to move against the mainstream of society which exploits us for its own purposes and leaves us both drained and defensive. But it is in this caring community that we can feel accepted and accept others as having real worth. Caring is not abstract but calls for dialogue at the deepest levels of life, i.e., self-disclosure and the gracious acceptance of others as they disclose themselves. There is always sacrifice in such a community as sentimentality gives way to love and the great burdens of life are shared and carried by one another.

The informal group of intimate friends who have shared the issues of life together know a trust that makes easy ventures of ideas. In this sort of experience living and learning are wed and out of that

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<sup>2</sup>Ross L. Snyder, "A Church as a Learning Community," address delivered at the United Church Assembly, January 29, 1962.

union comes the progeny of emotional satisfaction, social and spiritual well-being, which are over and above the garnering of facts and sharpening of insights.<sup>3</sup>

For the church, this dialogue would be sterile if it were not for the presence of the Scriptures. The Scriptures are the memory of the church whereby she is reminded of God's self-disclosure in history and in the personal experience of men. It is the record of God's impact on men at that point in history when he revealed himself in Christ. The history of the church as the continued Body of Christ must be included in this dialogue with real discipline.

The scriptures being the searching into focus and prepare the way for encounter. Members perceive that what has happened in the past is happening now; that the God of their fathers is their God, acting, confronting, judging, loving, forgiving, illuminating and empowering now. Among the learning outcomes of this revelatory experience there is knowledge about self and others, about one's heritage, about God in Christ.<sup>4</sup>

Revelation is a continual process and becomes more and more personal and concrete as one participates in the life of the community.

The internal fellowship of the church must move

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<sup>3</sup>Wesner Fallow, "The Function of Groups, in Learning Christianity" (Newton Centre: Andover Newton Theological School, 1950), p. 3.

<sup>4</sup>Paul B. Irwin, "Revelation and Christian Education" (Claremont: School of Theology, 1964), p. 11.

toward that of the New Testament *koinonia*, which knows nothing of cultural or racial barriers. This is the *minimum* requirement if the church is to mediate the holiness of God's law, of his judgment, and of his grace to the world around her.

Let us now turn to that characteristic of the church which has renewed her from age to age and helped her to be the people of God, namely that Christ is the head of the church and through him alone she draws life and power. Gilkey points out that at no time did the early church ever draw attention to herself as the source of faith, hope and love. Through Jesus Christ she found her relationship to God, and through his revelation she discovered her ability to mediate the holy to men.

Thus the church as a community, as the People of God, was constituted by its living knowledge of Jesus Christ and all He means--by Christians' continually reawakened knowledge of Him, and by their response of faith to this knowledge. The Word made flesh in Christ and preached as the Good News in and by the apostolic community is the source and origin of the church.<sup>5</sup>

The Word is till the message of God's act of salvation manifested in Christ, witnessed to in scripture, and testified to by the life of the community of God. Today, as the community of believers communicates the

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<sup>5</sup>Gilkey, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

Word of Jesus Christ and the total community responds in faith, individuals can know salvation in the form of peace, joy and love. This salvation comes through "repentance for our own particular sins and by the re-awakened personal trust, obedience, and dedication of self that true knowledge of Jesus Christ always brings."<sup>6</sup>

One other dimension of the life of the church which needs to be considered is that of worship. Oscar Cullman points out that in Paul's discussions on corporate worship in the latter chapters of I Corinthians, the basic aim is the building up of the community, the body of Christ.<sup>7</sup> The worship services in the New Testament church took different forms consisting of many elements such as instruction, preaching, prayer, singing, breaking of bread, baptism, prophesying, or speaking in and interpreting tongues. Not all of these elements were in the same service, but different ones were present in different proportions at various times. Nevertheless, the purpose of assembling was for the edification of the worshipping community and these elements were the foundation of the worship life of the Christian community.

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<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>7</sup>Oscar Cullman, *Early Christian Worship* (London: SCM Press, 1953), p. 119.

These acts or elements are closely related by Paul to the work of the Holy Spirit. They are spiritual gifts.<sup>8</sup> It is the Holy Spirit who stands in the midst of Christ's people pointing backwards to the crucified and risen Jesus, and forward to the coming Christ. Without the presence of the Holy Spirit there is no worship since the Spirit is required in the performance of the various elements of worship. In responding to the Holy Spirit and performing these elements of worship, the Christian's response is prayer, thanksgiving, and offering of himself in faith.

Two major problems confront the church in worship today. First, the use of the elements comes from habit and not the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The services are carefully planned and then repeated over and over. In contrast with this, Paul talks about the service progressing as the Spirit leads with each participant respecting others as he makes his contribution. The solution to this problem is not to attempt to recapture the New Testament setting and system but it is to involve the worshipers more in the elements. It is relating the worship experience to the lives and cares of the worshipers.

The second problem is the individualism of worship.

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<sup>8</sup>I Corinthians 12:4-11.

Sitting quietly as individuals in their pews each worshiper makes his attempt at worship. Sometimes he can feel good about it, but more often he comes away from a rather bland experience feeling unsuccessful in his attempt to contact God.

Wesner Fallow combines Paul's concern that worship edify the body of Christ with the concept of community in order to confront this problem. He says that when the totality of a person, a group, or a local church comes to focus in an experience of reverencing God, then it is worship. When there is interaction

which elicits fellowship, joy, peace, altruism, love and sacrificial generosity (this) is precisely the worship experience. But Christian worship is this plus the recognition that God in Jesus Christ is within the group, within the field of experience, prepotent among all the human energy systems present.<sup>9</sup>

Two observations can be made in the New Testament narrative that relate worship in a very practical way to the mission of the church. First, for Christ the walls between worship and one's relations with his neighbor are transparent.

So if you are offering your gift at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Fallow, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>10</sup>Matthew 5:23-24.

The second observation is made by J. C. Hoekendijk in such a startling way that it tends to lift worship out of the sanctuary and puts it in the mainstream of life.

He points out that

the redemptive mystery is not only Word and Sacrament. The mystery is that Christ wants to be present. According to his promise, he is not only where "two or three are gathered in his name" (Matt. 18:20), but (Christ is present) as well in the "least of his brethern, the hungry and the thirsty, the stranger and the naked, the sick and the imprisoned (Matt. 25:31)."<sup>11</sup>

Meaningful liturgy is not only that which is voiced in the sanctuary but is also the expressions of compassion and love given by the worshipper as he makes his way among the least of these brethern. The liturgy of the church should not be the only act for the hungry and the thirsty, the strangers and the naked, the sick and the imprisoned, but this ministry should be a part of her liturgy.

## II. THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH

The church looks at the world from Christ's perspective and with the compassion of Christ acts at points of human need. This action is her mission or ministry.

If there were a "religionless gospel" without reference to God, in which all transcendental elements of

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<sup>11</sup>J. C. Hoekendijk, *The Church Inside Out* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1964), p. 83.

the church were reduced to a more secular view, this gospel would still proclaim the lordship of Jesus over the lives of those who call themselves Christian. An adherence to the New Testament message from this point of view would still involve a willingness to serve others that would be radically different from the norm of society. The mission implied in such a theology would still involve the adherent in acts of mercy and movements for reform in the structures of society that would call for commitment and sacrifice beyond the comprehension of mankind. The only problem is that if Christianity were reduced to an ethical program, the local church might be totally replaced by other forms of ministry that were freer to work in areas of suffering, tension and conflict.

From this writer's point of view the church should definitely be involved in acts of mercy and movements for reform and feel free to become involved in every program, community, institution and resource available in the larger society in which she finds herself. Christian faith involves such relevance to the ills and sufferings of society that its ministry has no choice but to be broad and inclusive. The church must develop a multifaceted life only part of which is involved in local church work, if the community that acts out of the compassion of Christ is going to realize her mission.

But Christianity, as presented up to this point, has been basically concerned with the inner nurture of men, repentance, trust, and obedience to God. This often describes the theology of a local church that has narrowed down her ministry and withdrawn from society, but this does not have to be the case. It is a deep concern with what a man believes and trusts and with what he worships and adores which can produce a more secure foundation for acts of love and mercy. A brand of theology, form of liturgy, or code of ethics will not produce results. An inner trust and commitment correlated with an outer life of action is the center of the Christian faith as expressed in the conjunction of the two commandments to love both God and the neighbor. A faith that is not outwardly relevant to the world's life has no genuine element of transcendence left within it, and correspondingly, without an inner faith in God, acts of love are in the long run not really possible in the world's life.

This concern with God, with His claim on us, with His judgment of us and His freeing love and mercy toward us, must remain the nuclear center of the church's life in order to make possible the community of love and the acts of reconciliation it offers to the world.<sup>12</sup>

A local church must make three conscious efforts if

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<sup>12</sup>Gilkey, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

she is going to realize her mission. First, a direct conscious effort must be made to understand the basic needs of the society or culture in which she finds herself. This does not mean making a routine study of the community to discover ways of manipulating others to fulfill goals of self-interest, i.e., attendance records, budgets, etc.; but it does mean with sensitivity searching out the genuine needs of the larger community. In digging in to find the causes of many of the needs the local church will have to criticize what is evil in the society on which her members feed and prosper, or else, herself implicated, passively accept and so bless those evils.

Second, every local church must be aware of her own resources and capacities to meet need. The nature of the resources needed and their availability must be studied and directed toward need if a congregation is going to be effective in mission. Then, one of the lessons of the parable of the talents is that there are resources outside of an individual Christian and a congregation that need to be claimed and used in the venture. Certainly, many of the needs are so massive and the resources within the community of Christ so limited that the church must join together with other agencies and groups if an effective contribution is going to be made.

Third, a congregation that is a part of the church

must stand in the tradition of Christ and the apostles. This is a sacred call to mission where God's people cannot expect to reap the reward or receive the credit, but trust in the moving of the Holy Spirit and are willing to plant and water with the confidence that another will reap. This community must always make a conscious effort to view its response to needs and suffering from Christ's point of view and not from its own.

This involves every layman. The pastor stands in the tradition of the church in a special way and trains the layman, but the layman stands in the mainstream of daily life. This is where the great battles of life are being fought. Therefore the layman must not drift into his occupation or his leisure activities but must move deliberately to make his significant contribution and to make it in the name of Christ. Communities and nations will only be built in the chambers and offices of government; the poor and needy will only be helped in the slums; deeply disturbed relationships between people, races, and nations will only be redeemed in the very arena of conflict. Every layman must consciously move into these and any other arenas where need is laid bare.

"Today the problem is not how to find a gracious

God, but how to find a gracious neighbor."<sup>13</sup> One can and should be gracious, redemptive, wherever he finds himself. There is truth in the feeling that the occupation is not as important as the attitude one has toward those about him and the way he carries out his assigned task. Having a job title that suggests being redemptive does not make one redemptive. Every person everywhere is responsible for the way he handles himself within the structures of his society and this determines whether he is redemptive or not. Today the world in which we live, calls for a more meaningful concept of Christian vocation. Not only the manner with which a job is performed is important but the job itself is important. It is a question of whether the job is wasting one's energies in the excesses of society or concentrating one's energies in struggling with the needs of mankind.

It is the same with social activities and leisure. It is a question of the way one conducts himself during his leisure, but beyond this it is a question of purpose in the activities in which one is engaged.

By the same measure, leisure will acquire a positive definition. Instead of being the opposite of work, it will become the full utilization of man's potential for

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<sup>13</sup>Robert A. Raines, *Reshaping the Christian Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), p. 11.

the cultural and psychic benefit of himself and his fellows.<sup>14</sup>

The people of God in mission are not only concerned as to how they are going to act in whatever situation they might find themselves, but are going to determine as much as possible the situations in which they find themselves. The situations which they purposefully enter should not keep them on the periphery of life but in the center.

### III. SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The purpose of this section is to look at the church from a sociological perspective, i.e., in terms of the natural social processes that form a community. This is not to reduce the church to the level of just any community, but it is an attempt to discover those processes or structures that the church has in common with the natural communities of our society. There are some forces operating in the church, if our discussion from the theological perspective is valid, which are not common to other communities. While these will be absent in this kind of an analysis, they are never to be forgotten.

There are several advantages to defining those structures which the church has in common with other

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<sup>14</sup>Harvey Cox, *The Secular City* (New York: Macmillan, 1965), p. 88.

communities. First, it helps to understand the development of the structures within the church institution. Second, it gives a basis for sorting out those aspects of the institution which no longer serve the basic needs and mission of the church. Third, it helps put in perspective the relationship of the institution to the mission of the church.

James Gustafson, a sociologist and member of the Christian community, has made such a study of the institutional problem of the church.<sup>15</sup> His outline will be followed in the ensuing discussion.

### *Needs*

A natural community must meet needs or it will cease to exist. The institution that a community develops must be attuned to the needs which the community promises to meet if the institution is going to be relevant.

The church, like other natural communities, functions with reference to human needs. Sometimes it must meet the basic, physical needs of food, shelter, and clothing, but more often it is concerned with psychological and spiritual needs. To sort out the myriad of needs met

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<sup>15</sup>James M. Gustafson, *Treasure in Earthen Vessels* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1961).

at each occasion would be too extensive for this study, but the church, the same as other communities, must be structured to meet needs or it will cease to exist. The sacraments, worship, education program, and social activities must all meet needs if they are to be meaningful.

Preoccupation with institutional aspects is not the only factor which can keep a community from meeting needs, but this is often one of a combination of factors. To use an illustration, a classic requisite which the church has traditionally claimed to meet, but which she is being judged for not meeting today, is that of social integration. Ethnic groups, social classes, religious faiths and denominations, plus other rival groupings need an integrative force to break down barriers and unite men in their common concerns. Various segments of the church have too often identified with different groupings, taken on the mores of these separate parts of society, and have acted as a disintegrative force.

To say it is the fault of the institution that the church is not meeting this need is to oversimplify the problem. There is a complex combination of factors of which the institution is one. The need for a unifying force to act as a cohesive in our pluralistic society is a desperate requisite. If the church does not evaluate

all of these factors and make the necessary changes so that she can meet this demand, she will be by-passed in favor of other communities which are an integrative force. The starting point for any community including the church if it is to be need-satisfying, is in defining the nature of its ministry. Lacking this definition the whole institution may be irrelevant.

### *Politics*

From the family to the state, every community must have a purpose or mission. To make decisions to fulfill this purpose, or mission, necessitates a political organization in the larger sense of that term. A political process must be set up and maintained by all communities, including the church, if the *raison d'être* is going to be realized. A basic part of an institution has been formed when patterns of authority and power are established.

A pure fellowship of persons, or of spirit, cannot long exist without the development of definite political structures as well as doctrinal and liturgical patterns. . . . The development of political processes is a sociological necessity and not a sign of the moral degeneration of the holy community.<sup>16</sup>

Too often the clergy becomes the head of this institution, i.e., the man at the helm, and the institution

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<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 41.

eventually becomes an end in itself for him and the laymen. Through such self-feeding mechanisms the institution becomes static, and the purpose and mission of the church becomes more difficult to realize.

Every community is confronted with the same problem of maintaining an institution that is both relevant and dynamic. A natural corrective occurs through dialogue between members of the community. The two most important issues for dialogue are a continual defining of the nature and purpose of the community, and a continual study of the life and culture within which the community is operating. When changes are perceived in either of these points of reference, a change in the political process results, and the institution has progressed with the times. The church must possess the capacity to redefine her mission and study her milieu in order to keep the institution relevant and dynamic.

### *Language*

One of the processes by which any community maintains its unity and historical continuity is through the use of a special language or terminology. This language is made up of those terms necessary to portray succinctly the particular meanings of the community. A mark of a member of the community is to be able to understand and

use these verbal symbols. At the center of the group this language is used extensively and on the periphery, the language is less familiar.

A public or open community, such as the church, often discovers those outside of its membership using their terminology for various purposes and it becomes difficult actually to locate the boundaries of the community. The strength and outreach of a community can often be measured by the extent to which its language is used and understood.

For the church the Bible is the major source of her language. This gives the Bible a significant social function. By making the Bible available to different classes and cultures its language aids the Christian communities to develop and sustain a common social identity.

Two processes necessary to the development of this language are translation of the Bible and reflection and theological discussion. Different translation and different theologies have resulted in a variety of communities and denominations within the Christian fellowship, but the Bible as the object of translation and major point of reference for theological reflection does create a certain unity. It acts as a significant focal point which cannot be eliminated if a community is going to be related to the

historical community of Christ.

The language of any community becomes very personal to its members, and the church is no exception. One cannot become a participant in the community without sensing the special meaning attached to the church's language. At any time the church abandons its own language or equates the meanings of its language with that of another community it risks the loss of identity. For example, through the process of secularization, loyalty to a particular language diminishes and new social groupings occur. Usually these new communities are peripheral to the larger Christian community.

As the language is an integral part of any community, it is an integral part of the institutions of that community. At the same time, the institution is responsible for the development and perpetuation of the language of the community. The church institution is responsible, not only for the use of her unique language, but to insure adequate translation of Scriptures and theological reflection and discussion so that this language does not become static.

### *Interpretation*

Every community, especially those communities which are evangelical, must have a process of interpretation

whereby the common life of that community is explained to the larger society in which it finds itself.

There are two points of reference for this process that need to be considered. First is that which needs to be interpreted. For the church this would include the Bible, symbols and liturgy, language, Christian theology, the church as institution, and church history. Second is the milieu into which these aspects of the church are going to be interpreted. This helps make the interpretation relevant to the situation.

Here again the church renewal movement is laying siege to the church institution. Certainly theologians, pastors, and teachers are deeply committed to the task of interpretation and must be adept at using every tool available to interpret the distinctives of the church to the larger society in which she finds herself. The criticism is that the laymen and to a certain extent pastors and theologians, have lost their power to interpret and are no longer a part of this process. This has become apparent with the rise of urbanization and the failure of churchmen to interpret the church's message into the forces shaping society. The theologians, pastors and teachers are left estranged from the real structures of urban life.

The pastor cannot by-pass the laymen to reach the

larger society. His task is to help the laymen to acquire the tools for interpreting the church to society.

### *Memory*

A natural community builds up a common memory about those events most important in shaping its life and people sharing these meaningful events are drawn together into a common life.

"Jesus Christ, meaningfully interpreted in the life of the Church, becomes the point of integration of life and meaning for individual Christians and their community."<sup>17</sup> This continuity becomes deeply subjective and differentiates the peripheral members from those who have knowledge about the events and history of the church. For the members of the church, the events of the Old Testament, the person of Jesus Christ, and the experiences of the church through history are welded together with their own experience to give continuity to the community of Christ.

### *Belief and Action*

Without becoming involved in identifying various kinds of communities, it should be pointed out that every person participates in natural communities to which he

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<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 73.

does not self-consciously pledge allegiance. An example is living in one's home town. On the other hand there are covenanted communities in which a member has made a definite decision to belong. The church belongs in this category and to become a member one must confess loyalty to Jesus Christ. There are many disputes over the nature of this act, but there must be a self-conscious acknowledgment of loyalty to Jesus Christ that goes beyond intellectual assent to a basic trust and commitment.

This loyalty or belief is confirmed through action. The minimum action required in any community including the church, is participation in fulfillment of the natural processes already discussed. A member participates in meeting the needs of others for which the community is organized, follows the political processes and decisions, assimilates the community language into his vocabulary, interprets the ideals of the community into his daily action, and participates in the common memory and understanding of the community.

Looking at the church through its social processes exposes the humanity of the church. This kind of reduction which gives the church a social interpretation does not allude to weakness but to strength. The church is not a solid unchangeable institution that is to be transported around the world, but is a unity of believers in Christ

which expresses itself in many kinds of community depending on the culture in which it finds itself. The natural processes discussed must continue, but the form of the institution necessary to promote these processes will vary with the culture.

The Church's continuity, unity, and fulfillment of purpose require social processes.

The Church is a chameleon. It finds colors that fit it into various environments. It continues, yet changes; this is the value of its social nature.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 111-112.

## CHAPTER VI

### APPROACHES TO CHURCH RENEWAL IN KINSHASA

The suggestion of the following projects as approaches to church renewal in Kinshasa necessitates several observations. First, there is no effort to stay within the existing political processes of the church institutions. For instance, the alumni associations meeting as small Bible study groups across the city should be encouraged, but there should be no pressure to draw them into the church institution. Here is an opportunity for creativity in developing new structures that will be more viable to that culture.

Second, there are some extremely urgent needs that must be considered, such as medical and educational needs. Therefore the following discussion proposes a way in which some of these can be met. This is not an attempt to bypass dialogue, but rather to encourage it by making a concrete proposal.

Third, a process will be suggested for financing the schools, dispensaries and pastors. The government evidently cannot finance the social services needed in the city. The church is reluctant since there is a possibility that the government will eventually take them over and the church will lose its investment. It is this writer's

opinion that the major concern of the Christian fellowship should be the sick and uneducated, not the proprietorship of properties.

It would be totally misleading to suggest approaches to expanding the ministry and institution of the churches in Kinshasa without creating a procedure by which these suggestions might be realized. This process should include study, dialogue, experimentation, and evaluation.

Study is not merely the compiling of statistics about the city and the church, but an immersing of oneself in every dimension of city life with the express purpose of becoming acquainted as much as possible with the metropolis. Underneath the desire to understand the ways of the city, this kind of study can be an expression of deep concern and empathy, for individuals and all of the forces which go together to make up a city. Also, this kind of a study can be the beginnings of a bridging action or function that the church needs to assume between the various forces of the city. This bridging action is not a gossiping action whereby points of view are carried back and forth, but a half-way point where competing forces can sit down together to express their interests.

A study program of this nature should be conducted by representatives of every denomination, and representatives of the various city structures. The broader

the representation the more effective will be the study.

Realistically, it is not easy to involve people who are immersed in their own programs or tasks, severely limited in mobility by inadequate transportation and communication, and hampered by a limited formal education to become involved in studying their city. To counteract this lethargy, the need to know all of the institutions and forces within a community, and to know their prime interests, must be clearly defined and made attractive.

The rural nostalgia and small-town memories which cause the majority of African urban-dwellers to view the city as a place of temporary sojourn must be converted to an acceptance of the city as home and a desire to make it a good place to live. Those who should be involved in such a study need to see their program or task as fitting into the larger picture of the city and not an entity in itself. Funds must be made available to help overcome the problem of communication and transportation.

The study should include the nature and mission of the church and the social processes involved in forming a community. Some of the major areas of city life which need to be studied are government, industry, system of education, medical program, social services, labor unions, police force, crime, family life, communication and transportation, recreation, growth of population, housing,

language, tribal distribution, sub-cultures, employee education, unemployment, Catholic church and Protestant church.

The study of the Protestant church should include membership, growth, sex distribution, age distribution, occupations of church membership, education of church membership, attendance at church services, thorough analysis of finances, standard of living of pastors, education of leadership, political structure, total program and ministry.

During the study, and upon compilation of data, intensive dialogue should be carried on between those involved in the study and the larger church leadership. If this kind of study is going to influence the life of the church, it needs as large a base as possible within the church. This is only possible through involving the leaders in dialogue.

The discussion would have three purposes: The first is to put all of the material in proper perspective so that whatever conclusions are drawn, they will come from a total overview of the city and not a partial picture. A second purpose is that the basic needs of the larger community can be ascertained. Rather than expending all of her energies on needs that are symptoms of a greater illness within the structures of the community,

the church can discern the basic illnesses or needs and work with these. Third, the discussion should discover the means of meeting these needs.

There are some needs which the government, in spite of its weak, ineffectual state, could meet. Means of developing pressure that would encourage the government to meet these needs could be explored and organized. Other needs can only be met through the decisions and actions of individuals and the means to precipitate this must be proposed. Many needs will have to be met through the development of new programs by the church.

If the church in the Congo urban setting is going to develop a larger ministry, there are three characteristics which it must accept. These are an ecumenical spirit, and a willingness to offer many social services, and a willingness to cooperate with other agencies and the government.

Experiments must evolve out of the study and dialogue if the effort is going to bear fruit. These experiments should not only be well-planned, but a terminal date or action must be adopted and the willingness to fail be a part of the creative venture.

There must be a continual evaluation of all programs. This is a willingness to be critical to see if the best means are being used and the basic needs are being met.

Study, dialogue, experimentation and evaluation can create the fabric for the underlying process of renewing the vision of the city church of her role and ministry. The following approaches come out of the study which has already been made and are offered as a contribution to future study. These approaches are not unique to this dissertation. However, here the writer seeks to organize and coordinate these various areas into a meaningful thrust: (1) The development of a Christian center gathers various scattered ministries including dispensaries, schools, youth programs, evangelism, etc. and gives them a geographical location together with a better organization to make them available to more people. (2) The proposal of a ministry to the working class is the suggestion of a way of renewing rapport with leaders of the community, who are concerned about being outside the established church institution, and enlisting their help in meeting many of the major needs of the community. (3) The proposal of a means for counseling families offers the possibility of help for those families who are enmeshed in a new urban culture they cannot understand. (4) The proposal of church union is an effort to satisfy a need which the Congolese church leaders articulate repeatedly. (5) The proposal of the direction for the new seminary in Kinshasa is crystallizing the vision that the leaders of

this movement have had in pioneering this development. Therefore, the following approaches are vitally related to the church in Kinshasa.

## I. CHRISTIAN CENTERS

A Christian center involves multiple ministries that seek to serve the whole man. Geographically located at one site, people may come expecting to find aid in the general areas of medical, educational, and spiritual ministries.

That the vast majority of the inhabitants of Kinshasa are without adequate medical care is indisputable. It is also obvious that the Congo government will not be able to relaunch medical services to meet the needs of the population within the foreseeable future. There is only token medical help available now. The Queen Astrid Hospital in the center of the city is maintaining all of its services and is available. The hospital at Kintambo, the Western section of the city, is maintaining its services but on a much smaller scale. Together their services touch 200,000 people, at the most, from a population of 1,550,000.

There are several dispensaries operated by the Catholic church, Protestant church, and Salvation Army. These provide those medical services which can be given

by a nurse. The church dispensaries are stocked with supplies from various outside sources and there is no coordination in program. The government dispensaries generally do not have medicine and are not frequented by the population because of the ineffective treatment given. There are no dependable dispensaries in the fifty square miles of squatter zone. In the city there are also several private dispensaries operated by Congolese hospital attendants who have been trained in mission hospitals and have gone into private practice. Although they are expensive, their prices are usually within reach of the general population. These people have become quite wealthy and need to be challenged to be good stewards of their wealth as well as their training.

At each Christian center there needs to be a dispensary to give medical help. This service does not need to duplicate what others are doing in a few areas but can be coordinated so that the locations of the dispensaries are spaced to give adequate coverage of the city.

There are a large number of schools in Kinshasa, but not nearly enough to meet the needs of all of the young people. The government will not involve itself directly in education but channels funds through the church and mission schools. They subsidize the salaries of primary school teachers but are interested in using

what capital development funds are available for building secondary schools. This leaves many children without education.

The church is reluctant to build new primary schools for three reasons. First, the teachers are paid by the government. Rather than cooperate with the church when there is a difference of opinion they are often antagonistic to the church leaders. Second, the teachers often have a better education and higher salary than the pastors and are a threat to their place of leadership. Third, the money needed for school buildings is needed also for salaries of pastors and sanctuaries.

The problems that arise from the lower educational level of the pastor and lower salaries should not force the church to turn her back on the need of young people to study but should force the church to raise the level of education of its leaders and increase their salaries.

In the light of the needs, buildings cannot be held exclusively for one use or another, but must be multi-purpose. Primary schools are not the only need. Secondary schools, trade schools, schools of home economics, etc., all need to be offered.

The true ministry of the Church which no one else can take over from it is to form community. In the midst of the possibilities of a new society in Africa,

pilot communities must be created which can redeem these tensions and become the model of society as it is intended to be.<sup>1</sup>

Another service or ministry offered by each Christian center must be that of community. More than being a service or ministry this is a stance in society. In order to attain this stance a radical renewal of the congregation must take place so that its attention is turned outward toward the urban and industrial community. The dynamic of community which is developed at the center is not destined to stay within this fellowship but is carried out into the larger society where life is lived and crucial decisions are being made.

The real battles for the faith today are being fought in the factories, shops, offices, and farms, in political parties and government agencies, in countless homes, in the press, radio and television, in the relationship of nations.<sup>2</sup>

The actual location of each Christian center needs to be studied so that they will be spaced within walking distance of the homes across the city. If there were to be a Christian center within a mile of every house, it would mean the development of approximately 30 such centers.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Loffler, "Some Problems and Prospects of Urban and Industrial Mission in Africa," *Urban Africa*, No. 13 (July 1965), 2.

<sup>2</sup>David J. Ernsburger, *Education for Renewal* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1965), p. 34.

This distance would not be an unusual walking distance for a Congolese and the development of this number of centers would not be unreasonable.

Support for such a development needs careful study. There are major groups who work in the city: the Presbyterian, American Baptist, British Baptist, and Salvation Army. The Presbyterian Church in East Kinshasa is now using \$240,000 for capital development, i.e., building schools and sanctuaries. These new buildings are located in strategic parts of the community and can form the beginning of the development of facilities for Christian centers. American Baptists have just completed a capital funds drive of which \$180,000 will be used in Kinshasa. British Baptists, working in the center of the city, have no capital funds available. Gifts which can be raised for this kind of development will have to be used in this part of the city.

Medical work is always self-supporting if properly administrated. The Kintambo dispensary in the west end of the city has not only supported itself, but has financed some school development. Dispensaries at those centers where there is no medical help available could be built and stocked through a loan. The income from the services rendered could repay the loan.

The salaries of teachers would be covered by the

government. The major expenses that need careful consideration are the salaries of pastor and other personnel, maintenance of buildings, and office expenses. Within the present framework of the organized church being autonomous from the mission, these expenses must be met by a church which is self-supporting.

Dr. E. H. Cressy, while pioneering urban church renewal in Asia developed the concept of a "standard church."<sup>3</sup> He observed that a local church ministered to a few who frequented the meetings, but they never made an impact on the community until they became a standard church.

The term "standard church" refers to a local church which has developed its institution to the point of financially supporting a capable, full-time pastor, supplying means for its church office to adequately produce or purchase the material necessary for its program, training her laymen to fulfill their ministry in the larger community, and maintaining communications with the larger church around the world. The emphasis is on the necessity to set standards that will be necessary be unique for each area of the city according to the income level of the community; and that will give a congregation a target to

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<sup>3</sup>Earl H. Cressy, *Strengthening the Urban Church* (Manila: United Church of Christ, 1957), pp. 89-94.

move towards so that they can be a standard church.

These standard churches should be developed across the urban areas and should act as powerhouses to supply finances, equipment, and well-trained laymen to ministries that cannot normally support themselves.<sup>4</sup>

Within this concept, developing standard churches or bringing sub-standard churches up to standard would be a major requirement of any urban church renewal program before entering into any other endeavors that will require time, money or personnel and will keep the total church program dependent on outside resources. Through experiences of the church in Europe and America one is aware of the danger of this approach where the operating principles and program of a local church can become institutionally orientated and the institution becomes an end in itself. But, it is also out of this same experience that we know the necessity for organization and support. A balance must be maintained whereby standards can be met and maintained and yet the focus of the local church remain on its ministry.

Finances and "know-how" are an important part of this development. Therefore, a program of renewal should

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<sup>4</sup>Earl H. Cressy, "Program for Urban Church Growth" (unpublished manual developed for use in East Asia, 1960).

not only help the power group of the community find a new relationship to God and neighbor, but also to realize its added responsibility of ministering to the needs of their communities with programs that require their financial support and their active personal leadership.

Judging from the financial reports of churches in the city, a minimum congregation necessary for supporting a pastor would be 600 members. Another 200 members would be necessary to pay for office supplies, program materials, building maintenance, and relating this group to a larger union in the city and the church around the world. A standard church would be about 800 members.

This view of these various areas indicates that the support for the operation of the Christian centers could come from their own program. The discussion of a large membership suggests the necessity of a large sanctuary and mass meetings. As has been pointed out, however, the traditional African style of meeting is not in masses, but in small groups in the evening around the fire. Dr. Cressy has discovered that there is a new movement among Christians in the city to meet in small groups in homes for Bible study.

This movement is very similar to the rural church where larger meetings are held once a month but the majority of study and worship is led in smaller village

groups by a layman called a catechist. A rural pastor works with 15 or 20 catechists and helps keep their work organized. The smaller groups support the church center financially and through this schools, hospitals, and other projects are financed.

It would be a radical change for the urban church to return to the traditional style of the village, meeting in small worship and study groups. But, it would mean that within the mile radius of the Christian center many groups could be meeting regularly Sunday morning or evening. Teachers and other laymen could be used as catechists, thus more vitally involving them. The pastor could then work with the catechists.

The Christian center could be a place where many ministries would be offered to the community. The schools and dispensaries, plus other services deemed necessary could be located there. It would be a center for the pastor who could work with the church fellowship dispersed as it would be in the surrounding community.

## II. MINISTRY TO THE WORKING CLASS

As people crowd into the new urban areas, the acquisition of a technique of living in an industrial and urban society, must take place at an extremely rapid pace. Overnight the villager is thrust into a whole new life.

For instance, in the village he lived in comparative abundance because there was always a forest with food where he could find something to eat. Immediately, in the city, he lives on a subsistence basis; daily finding a few francs to buy a little food in the market.

Industrialization, reaching this continent in an advanced stage, confronts the African immediately with the sociological and economic problems of automation. As the villager, with his limited primary education, stands in line after line looking for work he discovers that the skills of the forest and river say nothing to a machine-orientated industry.

It is against this background that the church must define its ministry to the working class of the city. The working class encompasses all of the eight-hour-a-day workers who man the offices, government, industries and schools; both management and labor, European and African. This includes all salaried people in the city. At first, this would seem to encompass the majority of the working force, but it must be remembered that unemployment could be as high as ninety per cent and the actual working class is a very small group.

This working class is the elite, the power group of the city, and members of it, who were once a part of the Protestant church, have now separated themselves from

the fellowship. Many factors contribute to this condition. One reason is that the pastors are inadequately trained to minister to this group. With the creation of more schools, the educational level of the younger working class has been creeping up and up while the educational level of the pastors has been at a standstill. More and more the working class is embracing the city as its permanent home while the pastors, being more conservative, remember the village and constantly remind their people of the mores of that tradition. As the pastor fails to respond to the problems and aspirations of the working class the services are more and more orientated to the market people who attend. A vicious cycle continues and the separation grows.

Many ministries to the employed and unemployed could be suggested, but there are two which need immediate attention. One is a retreat center for the leaders of government and industry and the second is a school to upgrade the skills of the working class. The pastors must also be helped in the area of growing that they can minister adequately to this working class, but this will be analyzed in the discussion of the new urban seminary in Kinshasa.

The retreat center would not necessarily be away from the city, but a quiet, comfortable setting accessible

to those who work in government and industry. Alumni associations and other groups are always looking for places to meet since there are so few buildings convenient for meetings available in the city. They could meet at such a center. Various leaders in both industry and government, especially Congolese who are now emerging to the front, could be invited to make presentations that would encourage dialogue and a broader understanding of the interests of the various forces in the city. Also, it should be a place where friends who want to meet can feel free to come and relax.

A volunteer staff would need to be developed. Their first duty would be to call on leaders of the community, where decisions are being made and actions taken. They would need go in a listening stance offering friendship and an honest commitment to the needs of the community. Out of these experiences this staff could develop programs or opportunities whereby needs could be met, conflicting forces brought together, and ideas shared.

Those who are accepted to be a part of this volunteer staff should have three qualifications. First, they should be leaders in the community who are currently involved in industry or the government. Second, they should be involved in the new city culture and not negative to urban life. Third, they should be related to the church in

order to help overcome the division between the church and the working class and to develop a small group in the church who can relate a broader understanding of the city to the church. Their attitude would have to be similar to that of the Protestant Laymen Association of Detroit.

"But unlike most similar ventures, it seeks neither to convince nor to convert, but only to narrow the chasm between religion and work."<sup>5</sup>

The school to upgrade the skills of the working class would also be organized on a volunteer basis. Reference to a similar school in Port Harcourt is given in the appendix. Competence among the workers in government and industry is at an extremely low level and there is little available to help these people improve their skills. Many workers have been advanced quickly and are totally unprepared to assume their new tasks. Often they cannot turn to their superior for help, since he is not competent, or the worker is afraid of criticism.

At the same time there is no body of literature available either in their tribal languages or in French to which they can turn to read.

On the other hand, in Kinshasa is a large group of

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<sup>5</sup>Lee Dirks, "Detroit's Missionaries to Workers and Bosses," *The National Observer* (April 8, 1963).

Europeans and Americans who are highly trained and capable of teaching and helping the indigenous workers. The proposal is to inspire each of these who are highly trained to give one hour a week to teach. For instance a mechanical engineer would give one hour a week to work with Congolese mechanics in study and a project that would upgrade their skills. At the same per cent of response at Port Harcourt, 500 to 600 teaching hours could be organized in a city like Kinshasa.

The classes would not have to be held in the same building, but could be held all across the city. Part of the task would not necessarily be building up a large organized school, but inspiring administrators and industrialists to take time to have training sessions. The majority of workers are given a procedure to memorize and follow, and this is the extent of their training. The principles governing the task or the larger complex in which this task fits is never discussed and the worker does not grow in his occupation.

A by-product of the Port Harcourt school that should be mentioned is the new relationship that grew out of the experience. The volunteer teacher discovered that the African was eager to learn and he was putting more time into preparation and individual help. The sharing of skills soon grew into a new appreciation and

respect for one another which changed the attitude of both the teacher and the student.

The working class, which has more education and money than any other group in the city, and access to better education for its children, is the dynamic group forging a new African industrial urban society. The church must not give up this group as a lost cause but broaden out her interest and ministries to include it.

There are other factors working in the church's favor:

Because industrialization and urbanization are so new in Congo one finds everywhere a great openness towards a Christian ministry in city and industry. Trade Union Leaders, management, government, all welcome the Church's contribution in their struggle to improve the human condition. . . . While in Europe and North America it may take years to win confidence, here the doors are still open. This is certainly in part due to the desperate situation. The record of Christian witness and service in the past makes people expect some help from the church. And the time for it is now. Again and again one is struck by the sense of historic urgency and emergency. These are the critical and formative years. The church is invited to participate in the formation of a new urban and industrial society. Soon it may have missed this opportunity as it did before in the West.<sup>6</sup>

There are two new sources of help which are available outside of Congo. First, is the possibility of sending personnel for further training to successful projects in other parts of the world. *The Mission Populaire*

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<sup>6</sup>Loffler, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

*Évangélique* and the *Faculté de Theologie de Paris*, both in France, and the Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations in Chicago have special courses and practical experiences set up for this purpose. Many smaller projects offer special work experiences and welcome representatives from other countries.

The second source of help comes from the World Council of Churches. In January of 1965 its Division of World Mission and Evangelism was authorized to begin a program of *Urban and Industrial Mission*. After some study this Division will be prepared to give assistance in the form of both advice and finances for pilot projects, advisory service, and in-service training. At the same time they will be coordinating and promoting study through exchange of materials, consultations, workshops, and other endeavors.

### III. MINISTRY TO THE FAMILY

It is difficult to discuss a total ministry to Congolese families, but a point of beginning can be suggested. That point selected must have two qualities. First, it must put the church in a listening role. Second, it must be ready to aid those families which come seeking help, offering new education and insight into the matter of interpersonal relationships. For these reasons the

writer proposes that the church explore the possibility of marriage counseling.

Steward points out that "one of the peculiar marks of the twentieth century Western culture is the emergence of the professional 'listener to people's trouble.'" <sup>7</sup> A similar need in the growing urban areas of underdeveloped countries can be seen. The man, newly transferred to this new urban situation no longer has his friends gathered around a village fire in the evening to be his "ear," and the woman no longer has her neighbors at the river, or garden, or village with whom to talk. Therefore, they too must now seek a professional listener.

For the couple in the city the relationship they maintained in the village is no longer valid and they are caught up in the struggles of discovering a new relationship which can bring meaning and joy to their family life in the urban setting.

There are now couples who have never known village life, but who are caught without a past that they can look back on for guidance in developing their families. The church must reach out to these couples if she is going to help shape the new family in the city.

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<sup>7</sup>Charles William Steward, *The Minister as Marriage Counselor* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 29.

Because of the very culture in which the church finds herself she possesses a problem-solving technique which does not lend itself to meeting the needs of families in expected ways. The needs of a family usually do not manifest themselves until there is an actual problem or break in the relationship of the couple. These problems brought to a church leader are considered in a single session. His traditional object is never to heal a relationship but rather to judge who is wrong in the situation. The blame must always be awarded to someone in order to mete out the punishment which seems to be a necessary resultant for all abnormal cultural activity.

The relationship between the husband and wife is to be one of respect, service, and procreation, but not necessarily one of love. The pressure is to make both couples conform to cultural standards. Rather than helping the marriage relationship to be renewed from within, it is reconstructed from without.

The problem as presented by the couple is accepted as basic. There is usually no attempt to push beyond this point to underlying factors. During the session there would be no attempt to ask feeling questions. When the church leader would give his judgment, there would be no attempt to find out how those involved in the tragedy feel about the outcome.

The failure to be sensitive at this point cannot be blamed solely on the culture of the Congo. Studying marriage counseling in the West, one finds all kinds of material that helps discover what is happening at the deeper levels of feeling within individual lives and we can begin to analyze feelings and classify behavior. But on our library shelves we have little material related to the deeper levels of feeling of the African. In our haste to subdue, exploit, and Christianize, we of the West have spent little time listening, helping the deeper levels of feeling to be expressed, and recording it.

Family group therapy might be possible for some who have already started a family and have children as well as the newlyweds who want a new relationship. Those in the city who have met, felt a passion for one another, and married, are the frontier of a new and developing society and can pioneer in new family relationships.

The process of counseling as we know it, however, is so foreign to the African culture that the first overtures of this program would have to be played by a European or American, which offers many new difficulties.

The problem of crossing cultures cannot be underestimated. The marriage counselor needs to be aware of the stresses and strains being carried by each of the marriage partners and the psychosocial influences of

marriage on the personality, but an understanding of himself is the key to his listening to, understanding, clarifying, and where necessary, confronting the couples with whom he is working. When there is a triangle with a counselor steeped in one culture and a couple steeped in another culture, one must ask if the cultural barrier will be too vast to allow the counselor to feel what the couple are trying to communicate, and for him to be able to respond in a meaningful way. It would be helpful to be assured that there are basic underlying dynamics of marriage that bridge cultures and that are absolutes in counseling.

However, lacking this, the counselor in another culture needs to make a four-phased effort. First, he needs to attain fluency in the mother tongue of those whom he would counsel. Second, sensitivity to the dynamics of the culture to which he would minister would have to be honed to a fine edge through practice in order to feel what they are feeling. Third, careful case studies of successful marriages would have to be made. Fourth, one should work with a core of people who are both sensitive to and concerned about marriage relationships. Some pastors would fall in this category. The purposes for working with a group like this are to develop indigenous counselors and to have a group with which to discuss effectiveness

and to work out new techniques.

Wherever there are human relations there are breakdowns and failure in that relationship. The way a person handles this breakdown is first learned within the framework of the family. Therefore, if the church is going to realize the ministry of reconciliation it must pay particular attention to the family both in listening and supporting.

#### IV. CHURCH COUNCIL

On the inter-church level there needs to be developed a Council of Churches that would include all of the different denominations and organizations related to the church in the city. This council would have more authority and better representation than the existing "COPAL" which has no authority and is a loose council of those pastors and missionaries who stir themselves to come to infrequent meetings. This council would have at least four goals:

A. The chaos in the relationships between the different church groups does not reflect the kind of community suggested in the New Testament. Too long, the churches have been envious of each other's successes, indifferent to the other's needs, and critical of all but their own shortcomings. Outside groups have also been

able to exploit the weaknesses and dissensions within the different denominations. The most recent example is that of the Swiss missionary who moved in and by promising school and church buildings split churches away from denominations which did not have the means to build.

This constant tension among the larger organizations and their inability to resolve the conflicts which have spilled over into the legal courts, has weakened the position of the church as a power bloc in the community. It cannot speak collectively with force on any issue.

Therefore, the first goal of the Council of Churches would be to provide a forum for discussing problems, and resolving the negative self-feeding cycles that destroy communication.

B. There are certain activities that are being conducted by the various organizations which need to be coordinated through a Council of Churches.

The first of these activities is the development of parishes so that Christian centers can be equally spaced across the city without competition. The old comity arrangement is dead and we are now at a stage where the different denominations will be invited by local groups to move helter-skelter over the city. The American Baptists are already in Presbyterian and British Baptist territory. The Council needs to help the denominations

rise above this outmoded stance and discover new means of spacing and developing Christian centers.

The second activity which needs to be coordinated, not only among the denominations but with the government, is the development of primary schools and secondary schools. There are some areas where the children are walking five and six kilometers to go to school and other areas where there are several schools and the classrooms are not filled. At the same time, the quality of education has slipped and there is no program to help those teachers interested to upgrade their teaching technique and their grasp of the material. The British Baptists have made available a graduate from Kimpese Seminary (secondary school level) to work in the primary schools to help those teachers who are teaching religion. This is a sacrificial effort on their part and a good beginning.

A third activity which could be coordinated and expanded to minister to the medical needs of the community is the medical program on the dispensary level.

A fourth activity that needs definite attention is that of a central building pool. The local congregations are attempting some construction on their own but the buildings are inadequate and tend to disintegrate before they are completed. There are some local fellowships and schools in the central area which need buildings desperately

while other groups in the eastern and western parts of the city who do not have as dire a need are receiving them. The need is not to take away from some areas but to find the means to help the groups in the central area as well. At the same time, there should be adequate planning to determine the kind of buildings needed. Program must be developed before buildings are planned.

C. In addition to these various ways in which the Council of Churches could help the different denominations and organizations to coordinate their activities in such a way as to minister to a larger part of the population, there are also activities in which the churches should be engaged that a Council of Churches could initiate.

An example is that of laymen and pastor training. In the city of Kinshasa the European-American segment of the church is unrelated to the much larger Congolese segment. There are ways in which this well-trained, highly skilled European-American group could help the Congolese layman. One of these, discussed under the church's ministry to the working class, could be initiated by this Council.

A major factor contributing to the dormant state of the church is the inadequacy of most of the city pastors. For the entire metropolis there are only three ordained Congolese pastors. All three have finished high

school but only one has studied two years at a university. None have finished their theological studies on a university level. To assist them there are 20-25 other men who have finished primary school and have taken some courses in a Bible school.

There are three characteristics of these men and their situation which cut deeply into their urban ministry. First, all of them were trained for a rural ministry and were pastors in the country. Because they were effective rural pastors, they were brought to the city but have no background or special training for the urban ministry of the church. They lack understanding and feeling for those who are involved in the industrial, commercial and governmental life of the city.

The second is that their educational level is far below that of the working class. When Moise Tshombe was prime minister of the country and asked for a pastor to visit him regularly, the church was embarrassed. They had no pastor to offer who knew anything about the world of politics or the pressures facing the prime minister. This lack of education shows up in various other ways. The men are not related to a larger body of material because they do not possess a reading knowledge of a more universal language than their own tribal tongue. The lack of access to and interest in newspapers, magazines and

radio also greatly hamper the understanding of these pastors for their congregation and their problems. They do not have the tools to study the Scriptures or discern the ambiguities in the life about them so the bread of life they are breaking is pretty stale.

The Council of Churches could initiate a study program for these pastors to help them take hold of their urban ministry. There is one danger in this kind of education which must be avoided. The theology of the church today is basically the memory of the past. It is what one or another missionary said or did or taught. This kind of teaching should not be perpetrated by finding a more up-to-date missionary. Whoever works with these pastors must struggle to bring to life that creative element in the church and pastors that would help them to create their own theology and ministry.

Therefore, the third goal of the Council of Churches would be to initiate action that is needed in those areas where nothing is being done. The two schools suggested are examples.

D. The fourth goal of the Council of Churches would be to become a power structure in the community, one that is respected for its concern for the total community and dynamic enough to challenge and encourage other power groups to work for the good of the community.

It is not possible for a solitary person to take the four goals that have been discussed and fashion an organization that will carry out these goals and be accepted by the churches of Kinshasa. It is possible to project a point of beginning where dialogue necessary to establish such an organization could be had.

Some years ago there was a movement to develop a city-wide organization to unify the church. A constitution was drawn up and the various denominations were studying it, but the denomination leading the movement experienced a serious division and the project was stalemated. Today there is a growing feeling that this movement should be revived. The suggested place of beginning by the majority of those concerned is to form a federation committee and work out an agreement in the form of a constitution.

Political union is not the place to start since there is so much mistrust and confusion, and those who will be working on the document do not have an image of an urban church and its ministry. The place to start is with the formation of a commission, representing all of the factions of the church, that is committed to study and then to initiate action. This group should represent all of the denominations and men, women and young people within these denominations. It should also include representatives of youth and student movements, the Bible

Society and alumni associations.

From each denomination and association the administrative group should select their own delegates following the aims of the commission. Each delegate should be chosen for his capacity to represent his denomination or organization, to understand the scope and material of the study, to discuss his ideas with the other commission members, and to project solutions to problems that are encountered.

The commission would have three goals. The first would be to study the present-day church and the city in which she finds herself.

The second goal would be to define the needs of the community and determine what resources from within and without the church would be necessary to meet these needs.

The third goal would be to initiate several activities that would be within the new understanding of the nature and mission of the church and yet give the churches a taste of working together.

In conclusion, the commission could conduct the study, dialogue, experimentation, and evaluation suggested at the beginning of this chapter, or the group making such a study could evolve into this kind of a commission. If the commission has fulfilled its goals it should be able

to help establish a basic organization that will function as a Council of Churches.

#### V. EVANGELICAL THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL OF KINSHASA

At the time of the writing of this dissertation approximately fifteen different denominations have voted to establish a seminary in the city of Kinshasa. The geographical area represented by the different denominations covers over fifty percent of the Congo and both rural and urban churches.

One of the major purposes of establishing this seminary is to pool personnel and resources to create a school of consequence. Presently, in this same area, are many little schools with a total of 20 teachers and 40 students. The goal is to combine faculties and work toward a school of 100 students by 1969.

A second purpose is to put "the students in contact with the development of the young nation, its leaders, and distinguished visitors so that the future pastors receive a broad education."<sup>8</sup> The isolation of the individual schools scattered across the Congo creates philosophically

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<sup>8</sup>Rev. Wesley Brown (speech given to the delegates who came together to form the Evangelical Theological School of Kinshasa, April, 1967). (Mimeographed; original in French.)

provincial students.

Since the seminary is not uniquely for the city of Kinshasa, the city churches cannot expect the full attention of the institution. But, the city cannot help but have an influence on the nature of the school. The influence should be dynamic enough to orientate the structures of the seminary to the urban way of life. Since the whole development is new and contemporary this is not an established fact, but it is a need. With Africa turning urban, the need is for seminaries dedicated to training men for the urban ministry.

In spite of this institution being responsible to a large area in Congo, it should become involved in the life of the church in Kinshasa at the following points:

1. To understand the emerging culture, both the faculty and the students should participate continually in a study of the city that is as extensive as the study outlined at the beginning of this chapter. A department of new ministries could be established to study, launch experimental programs, evaluate their effectiveness and relate the results to the students and churches represented. Certainly the students should be involved in this kind of creative effort.

2. The level of education of pastors presently ministering to the city is far below many in the working

class and is inadequate to cope with the complex problems of urban life. The writer would propose to the various denominations and mission groups working in the city, that they subsidize the salary of several pastors so that they can study at the seminary and continue their preaching on weekends.

The majority of city pastors are presently augmenting their salaries by teaching. The subsidy or scholarship would simply replace that which they are earning and free them to study. Their presence would also be of benefit to the school.

3. The faculty should offer leadership training courses for laymen. This would be attractive to the leaders of the community who are members of the elite, help to attract those leaders back to the church, serve to meet their needs and answer the questions that come out of their places of responsibility, and train catechists for the Christian centers.

4. Few pastors have libraries. Those pastors who have books have received them as cast-offs from departing missionaries. Thus, a literature program for pastors is desperately needed and the facilities for the creation of this are existent in the city. A Protestant press is in operation and the city affords many writers who could be tapped to produce books geared for the Congolese city

pastors. The presence and facility of a central library at the seminary will be of great benefit to these pastors, as well as laymen and students.

The seminary hopes to open its doors in the city of Kinshasa in September, 1968. Its total nature and direction will have to be worked out in the coming months so that it may be the best tool possible to meet these many, varied needs. However, it is evident that this institution can play the role of lighting the torch and carrying it in the event of church renewal in Kinshasa.

## CHAPTER VII

### SUMMARY

Chapter II discussed the extremely rapid development of the colony and the inadequacy of the paternalistic, colonial government as a foundation for a new nation. The government, Church and industry were united in developing the colony and when this trinity was shattered, the colonialists had neither the strength nor the will to continue. With independence came economic chaos, inefficiency in government, loss of political control, and deterioration in social services.

In Chapter III the author presented the extensive change in social patterns and mores that is taking place as Congolese leave the shelter of clan and village to move to the city. In learning to discard the past, steeped in animism, as a way of life that is no longer valid, these migrants experience a disintegration of moral and spiritual values. From this standpoint one sees a degradation of the Bantu civilization. However, from another point of view can be seen the possibility of this period of transition containing a better civilization with greater liberty.

In Chapter IV the writer has pointed out that 92% of the Protestant Christians who move from the rural to the urban areas do not become a part of the established city

church. Those who belonged to a fellowship in their village do not catch a vision of the church and its mission in the urban setting. The church is pensive, retiring, dreaming that something might happen, and yet not knowing what. Her self-image has not developed the point of seeing herself embroiled in the life of the city, playing an important, creative, redemptive role in society.

In Chapter V the author presented the church as a result of the impact of Jesus Christ in history. Through faith in Jesus Christ individuals are united, and they find a common, inner life as a result of the activity of the Holy Spirit. Every Christian must see himself in Christ's tradition of meeting the sufferings of the world.

If the church is to continue as Christ's community, she must be orientated toward meeting needs. To realize her *raison d'être* the patterns of authority and power, i.e., a political process, must be established. A language must be propagated which succinctly portrays the ideals of the Christian community, and this community must translate itself into the larger society in which it finds itself. Belief in and loyalty to Jesus Christ must be expressed in a definite participation in the processes of the community.

The writer, in Chapter VI, suggested four concrete ways in which the city church can penetrate the life of

Kinshasa: first, through establishing Christian centers to minister to several basic, critical needs of the city; second, through the establishment of a mission to the community leaders through which dialogue can be started between this class and the church; third, the creation of a means of working with a basic unit of every class and tribe, the family, and being a real presence as the radical shift in relationship between parents and children takes place; fourth, by helping the church to move out of the shadows and become a united force with adequate power to temper other powers within the structures of the city.

William E. Steel writes,

The voice of renewal is not aimed at renewing the church; its intention is to renew a vision, to recapture a dream, to restore a significance to Christian endeavor and to make a new world. When renewal occurs, it may be discovered that the renewal of the church occurs also, as a by-product of a new Christianity, intent on being God's servant people in the world.<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to determine the form or shape that the church with a renewed vision will take, especially in another culture. But, it must take a renewed vision. The author believes that it will take a certain amount of introspection and a great deal of reaching out to minister to the needs of the city, if the church of Kinshasa is

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<sup>1</sup>William E. Steel, Minister of Woodland Hills Methodist Church, "A Functional View of the Church," preface, p. 1 (mimeographed).

going to recapture her vision. The writer plans to invest the next four years as a member and a pastor of the Kinshasa fellowship in an effort to help these Christians explore new avenues of service and find both a joy and challenge in being urban-dwellers.

## APPENDIX

### The Port Harcourt Project, Nigeria

Certainly, this has been the largest and most successful project on the African continent for renewing the ministry of the church. In ten years this port city went from 60,000 to 300,000 in population with the discovery of oil and industrialization. Most of the industries were highly automated and although they were a large development, they hired relatively few people. Michelin Tire Company interviewed 22,000 and hired 500 people. Slums sprang up in the center of the city and within one four-square-mile area there were over 90,000 people crammed into little rooms and sharing communal kitchens. Each room rented for \$6.00 a month. There was no drainage, sanitary facilities, or running water. Within a mile were built luxurious dwellings for the managers of the firms. They rented for \$340.00 per month and rent was due three years in advance. "To him that has shall be given, and to him that has not, even what he has shall be taken away" was the byline of the allies.

The Port Harcourt Christian Council, a loose fraternity of Protestant churches, called a specialist from Birmingham, England, to study the situation and propose a program of action. From his proposals the following action was taken.

1. Teams of Council members were sent on trips to inspect projects in other parts of Africa. These teams helped the churches band together under one name and organization. It included every denomination from Episcopal to Salvation Army.

2. All pastors were asked to study. Some were sent out of the country, others to universities in the country, and others studied at home. The criteria used to judge whether they could stay in the city or be returned to the country was whether they could read and preach in English (Nigeria is a member of the Commonwealth). The purpose of selecting this criteria was to keep these men in the city who were related to a larger body of reading material, and who could utilize newspapers, magazines and radio.

3. An Industrial Team was organized and this team started work in three areas:

a. A mission was set up at the Port and a port chaplain was put in charge (supplied by the Anglican Missions to Seamen). He runs a Seamen's Mission, where there is a swimming pool, air-conditioned restaurant and bar (beer and soft drinks only), a library, billiards and a movie three times a week. The purpose is then to bring the men into the life of the local church.

There are from 100 to 120 ships a month that dock and the chaplain visits each one. There is an industrial

worker that works out of the same mission who is concerned with the other activities and workers on the docks. His work is to organize discussion groups among workers, trade unionists, and managers. Now there are permanent discussion and study groups for different classes of workers, trade unionists and managers and they pay a fee to attend. Volunteers from the expatriates teach these groups. This project expanded to include people from all industries.

One of the big divisions that showed up in the discussion groups was between organized labor (unions) and management. Misunderstandings, misinformation, and uncooperative attitudes were apparent so a management-union seminar was organized. It was so successful that at the end of the period, regular monthly meetings were arranged and have continued.

From the discussion groups and seminar it became apparent that a library was needed to bring together resource material for study and resolving of problems.

b. The second area of work tackled by the Industrial Team was education--not primary and secondary--but special courses. An extensive series of courses was organized to meet educational needs of all kinds of workers. Expatriates were asked to help, and out of 5,000 there were 300-400 who volunteered an hour a week to teach. These volunteers not only staffed the school but helped in

all kinds of church projects. Their hour of intense help amounted to having 10 or 15 full-time staff members.

c. The third area was that of technical education for women and girls. In a town where prostitution is such a problem, it is no use being moral when often it is a girl's only means of feeding herself. Where there is great unemployment it is hard for young women to find a job so the school inquired to see what jobs were available and what standards were required. Then they trained them to be able to fulfill the needs of the job.

4. A Social Service Division was organized. The members of this team live in the heart of the slums and help with adult literacy classes, with recreational facilities, run youth clubs and discussion groups for boys and girls. One-half of the 90,000 in the four-square-mile slum area are under 21 years of age.

5. One hundred and twenty thousand dollars per year was raised for the project.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Michael Mann, "The Port Harcourt Project," A Monthly Letter about Evangelism, Nos. 4/5 (April/May 1965). A publication by the Division of World Missions and Evangelism of the World Council of Churches.

History and opinions by Bishop of Port Harcourt from a personal interview.

Church and Industry Project, Nairobi, Kenya

One of the earliest of the special urban church movements in Africa was started by the Christian Council of Nairobi. There are three major thrusts to their program.

The first thrust are the Industrial Life Groups. About 200 people are involved in meeting in small groups all over town once a month to discuss a variety of subjects. Their concern is the starting point and this ranges from human relations in industry to Africanization and Westernization; economic problems; social questions; family problems; and religion. Each group is held together by a convener. He notifies the members of the meetings, opens the meetings and then turns it over to a staff member to lead the discussion. Often the discussions are vague and dull but more frequently there are real insights shared. The first impact is that over and over again people are excited to discover that the church is prepared to take their concerns seriously.

Problems have centered around the difficulty of making all the personal contacts that are necessary and the costly shepherding of every group. On the other hand, some groups have given birth to definite projects in their community such as further adult education classes, the formation of a welfare association, and the building of a

township school.

The second thrust of their program is Industrial Life Conferences. Several times a year Industrial Life Conferences are held from Saturday lunch-time to Sunday tea-time. These usually take place in the Limuru Conference Center, twenty miles outside of Nairobi. A current topic is chosen and treated at greater depth than in the evening groups. A prominent expert usually opens the subject; then the seminary groups discuss it and report back. Further discussion takes place in the light of a Bible study which aims to bring out the theological dimension of the topic, by which is meant our understanding of this subject in the light of our understanding of God and His ways with man.

The thirteen Industrial Life Conferences, held since 1960, have been on subjects like "Christian Responsibility in the Trade Union Movement," "Human Relations between Men and Women at Work," "Human Relations Problem of Africanization," "What is Communism?" "Problems of Young Workers," "Work for All," "The Nairobi We Want," and "Participation in Nation-Building," "Urban Culture," etc. There also have been similar conferences for young workers, supervisors, and managers. Trade Unionists have taken part in nearly all these conferences, as speakers, panel members, and/or participants.

The third thrust of the Church and Industry Program

is to try and feed back into the life of the churches some of the experiences gained in the work described above. Each year a three-week Urban Mission course is held for theological students and pastors. The aim is to expose them to the world of industry and the city, to try and think theologically about this new society, and to see what this means for the urban church.

In the first week people from various levels of industry are contacted to help the pastors to discern the outline of industrial organization, some of the problems which arise, and the machinery which exists to deal with them. Underlying these things are basic concepts like justice, group-relations, the sciences and technology; and the attempt is to try and see them in the light of Biblical revelation.

The second week takes them into the urban environment of the metropolis. They visit the city planners, medical and social workers, community centers and some of the organizations who deal with the casualties of city life. Urban culture, urban youth, and the urban family and its distortions are subjects for evening forums and help to provide the raw material for our theological thinking.

In the final week, they look at the urban church. On the two Sundays they visited various selected congregations in teams, and met pastors and lay leaders. After

attempting to analyze something of the different traditions, they go on to ask how far the existing pattern of life in the churches is in fact gearing into the life and needs of the city.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Andrew Hake, "Preparing Men for Urban Ministry," Urban Africa, No. 11 (January 1965).

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